SKELETON CREW

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Soft Centre

JAMES CAMERON
Exclusive Interview

BRIAN BLESSED
This month's guest reviewer

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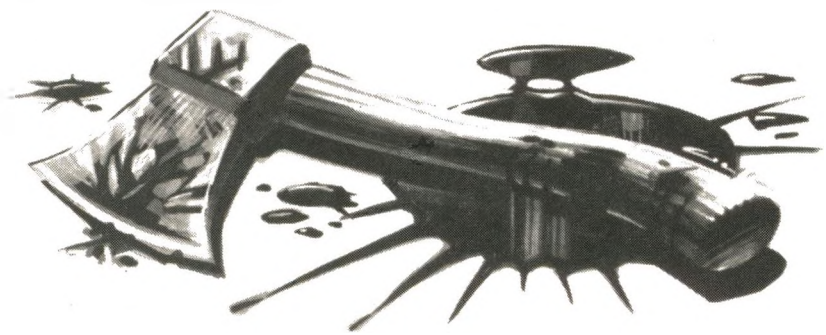

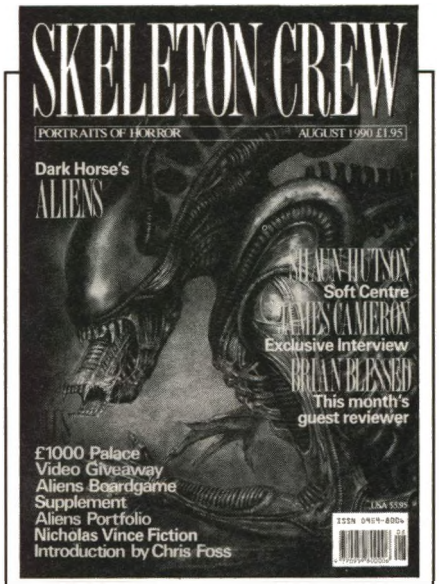

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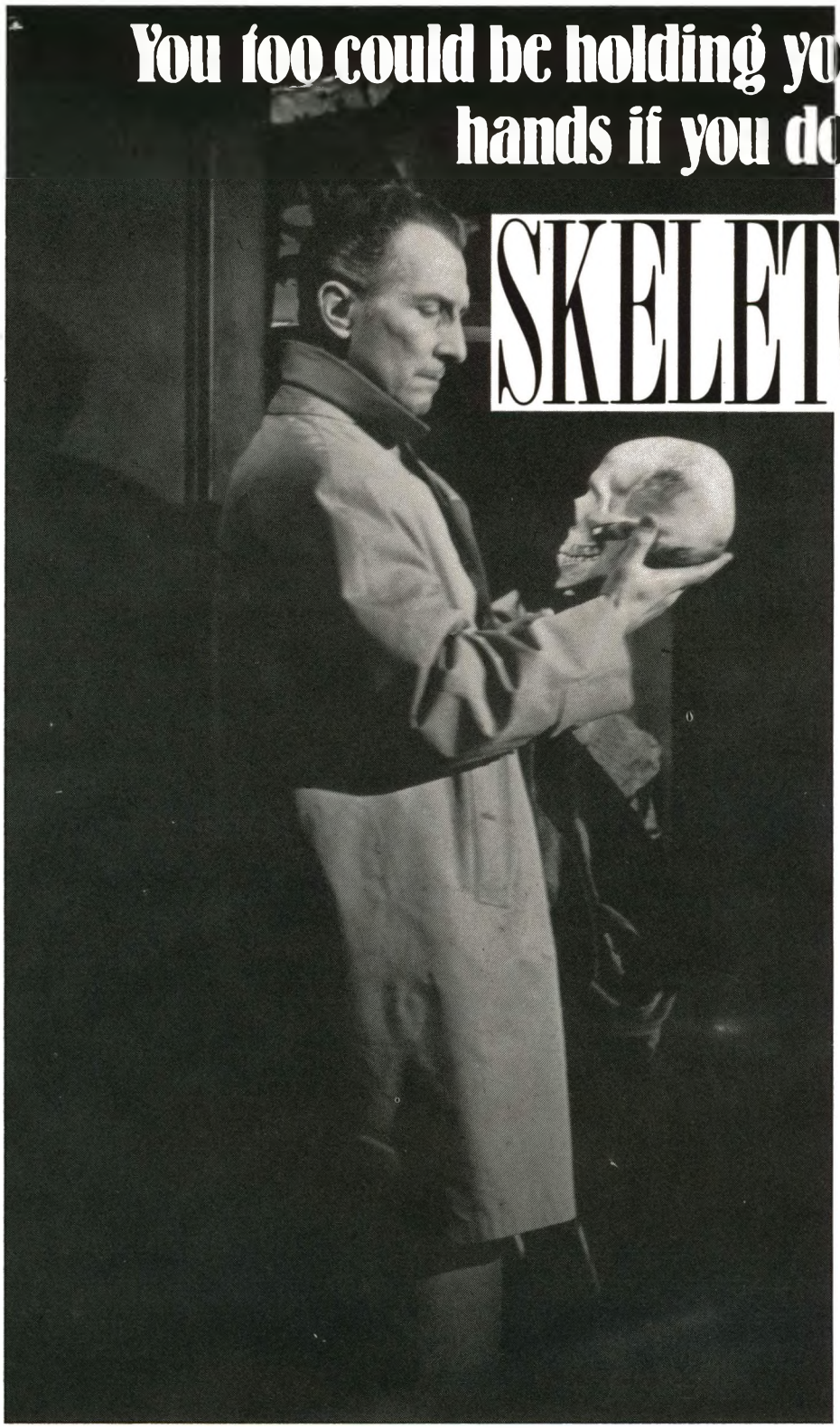

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Dead Write

PHOTO: Grafton Books

Chris Foss — one of the concept artists for Dan O'Bannon's *Alien* — describes the early days of the movie that spawned this issue's subject, *Aliens*.

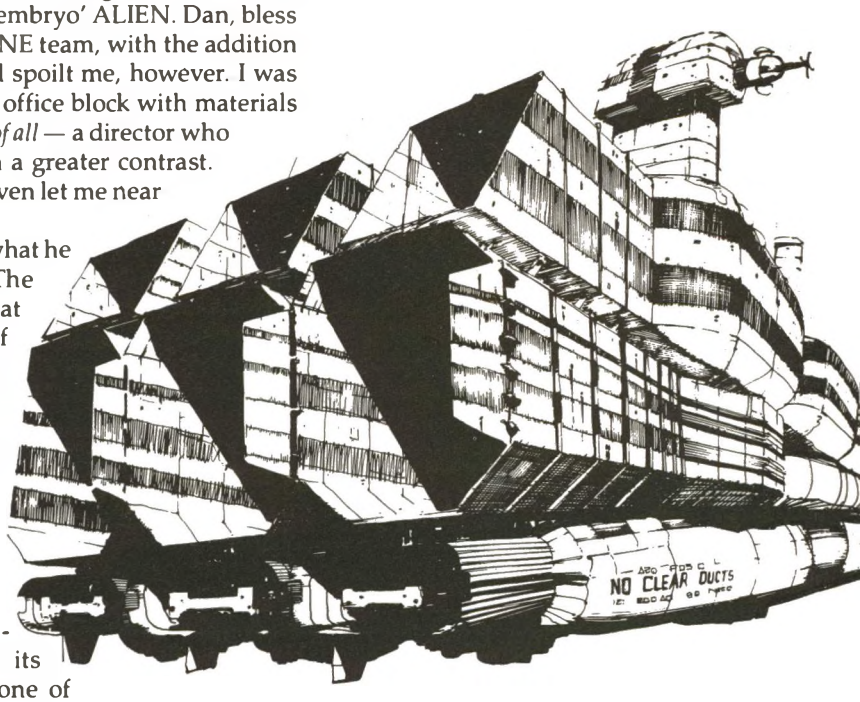
"Hold on, you'll like this . . ."

Simultanously Dan O'Bannon braked hard and mounted the kerb. This was his version of parking. It was my second day in Los Angeles — or was it my third? Initial memories are hazy as during the eleven hour flight from London an oil tanker navigator and myself had drunk the entire Tourist Class allocation of Champagne.

Dan was by now attacking one of those fragile looking newspaper dispensers that so stoutly defend their merchandise until the correct change is inserted. Eventually Dan won and, flushed with success, returned to the vehicle. Tossing the paper into my lap, he occupied himself with coaxing his poor tired Chevy into its version of life. (One of our civilisation's great tragedies is that Dan was too young to qualify as a chariot driver when they were making BEN HUR. Riding shotgun with him was as near to a simulated Kamikaze ride as I wish to get.) Reluctantly I took my eyes off the boulevard to glance at his prize. Printed on pulp paper, which made it all the more lurid, it was probably the most pornagraphic journal I have ever seen, and — wait for it — featured in this particular issue was a graphic spread drawn by 'Dangerous Dan O'Bannon' himself . . .

Few people know that amongst his many talents Dan is a gifted — if unorthodox — artist, which made his appreciation of mine and Ron Cobb's work all the more respected. Dan and I originally met back in the heady days of 1975 when we were both hired, together with Jean 'Moebius' Giraud, by Alejandro Jodorowsky to create his version of DUNE. It was a phenomenally creative period and, goaded by the guru-like Alejandro, I produced some of my most original work. We were literally a gang of three working under the master to create a multi-million dollar movie. Dan was equally under Alejandro's spell, so his disillusion was as great as mine when one million pounds, four months, and a *lot* of work later, the project did not resume after the Christmas break. Needless to say the DUNE that finally made it to the screen was pitiful in comparison to Alejandro's vision.

Back in Los Angeles, Dan picked up where he'd left off, creating a new version of an old screenplay called THEY BITE. This was the 'embryo' ALIEN. Dan, bless his heart, was very keen to re-assemble the old DUNE team, with the addition of his artist friend Ron Cobb. DUNE (in Paris) had spoilt me, however. I was used to working in a palatial, no-expenses-spared office block with materials instantly provided on demand, and *most important of all* — a director who knew what he wanted. Hollywood could not have been a greater contrast. Furious politicking dogged the early days — Dan didn't even let me near the studio till day four.



The first director earmarked for ALIEN had no idea of what he wanted, and in any event was occupied on another film. The last few days of my first week at Fox were spent doodling at his desk and passing the time of day with a succession of stunning secretaries. Dan, on the other hand, knew *exactly* what he wanted and could not understand why Ron and I could not be put to work. It was at about this time that I stumbled across the time-honoured Studio phrase: "What can we give the creative people to keep them happy?"

My initial studios on the Fox lot were in quick succession: a washroom complete with 100 basins, a room above the carpenters' shop that never went below 100°, and finally a dark, windowless cubby hole in an empty studio block. The lack of production commitment had its compensations: Los Angeles secretaries had a nasal tone of command that could cut through nuclear reactor-thick concrete, and it was with some

Dead Write

satisfaction that I discovered one could tell these Valkyries anything — and I mean *anything* — and provided it was with an absolutely serious straight face and suitably solemn tones they would *believe* it! The most effective response was on the occasion when I told several tedious telephone enquirers that Mr O'Bannon was not available as he had been shot during a production argument and had been rushed to the veterans' hospital. In fact, it was incredibly difficult to then convince sometimes hysterical callers that I'd been 'pissing about.' After a *very* long pause, one senior executive asked over the line, "Chris, when can I call back and you *won't* answer the phone?"

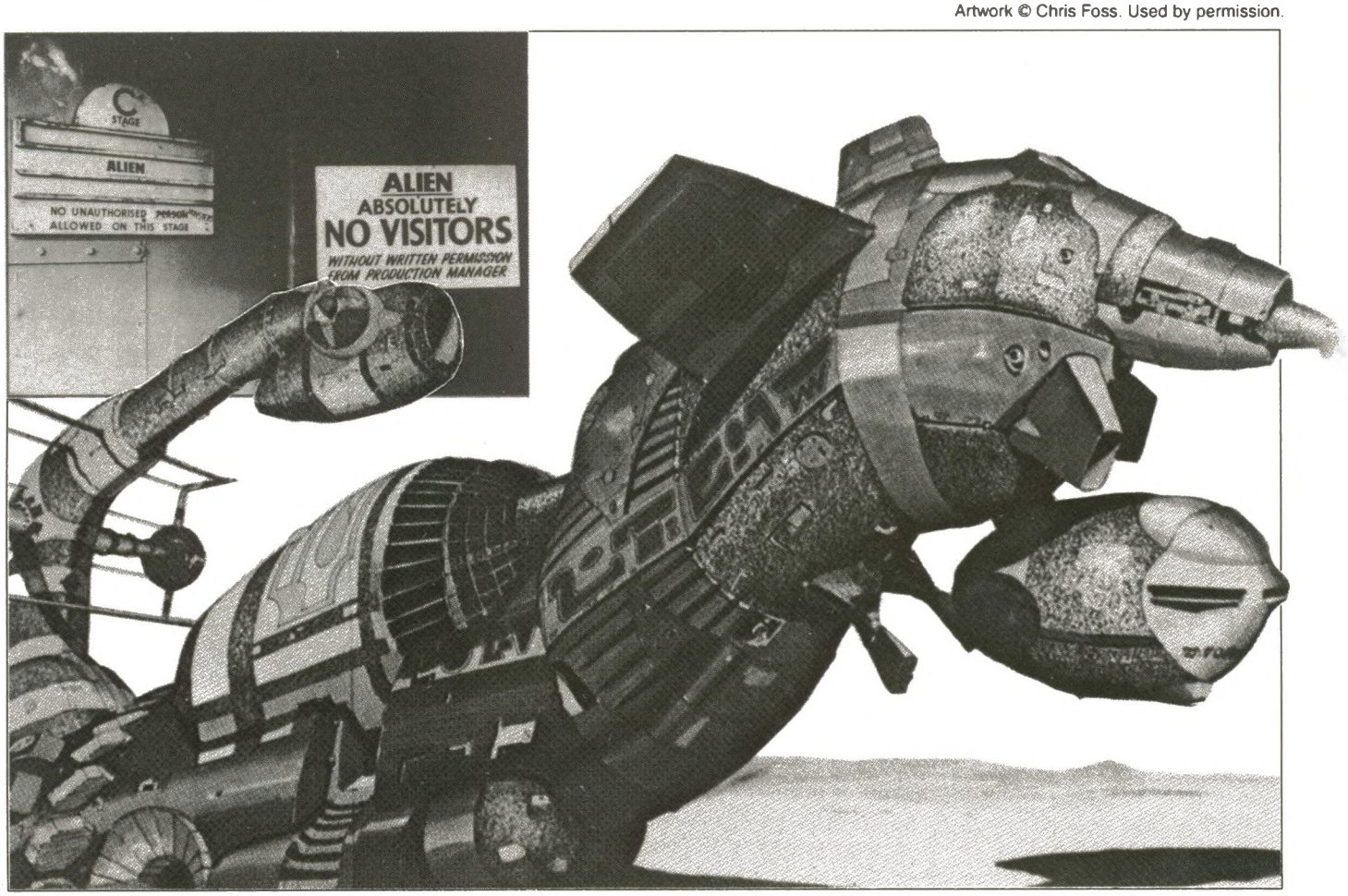
Ron Cobb had a delightfully quirky sense of humour. On one occasion a loud voice from outside came floating up to our floor, amplified by a megaphone: "This is the police, come out with your hands up!" Ron and I crouched below an outer window and called back through cupped hands: "Don't shoot! We have hostages!" A flushed executive came pounding up the stairs and looking out we discovered a mass of gantries and people. We had just wrecked a take for a street scene in the STARSKY AND HUTCH series.

A bit like the second coming, the producer (Walter Hill) was always due to visit us but never quite made it. Finally, after a particularly creative burst on our part, the great man finally put in an appearance, complete with dark-glassed acolytes. He stared around the room, papered sheets thick in interior and exterior designs for the Nostromo. "Yeah — room full of spaceships," he pronounced, and walked out.

At about this time Dan realised that his baby, his vision, was leaking from his grasp. His normally pale face now had a palour similar to our detail paper, and horizonless eyes stared from an Ancient Mariners look-alike. The desperately faithful Chevy echoed her master's misery: By the second script re-write, one headlight was eyeless and the front bumper's services were no longer required. After the third re-write, the grill dissapeared and curiously the car had crumpled six inches shorter. When the producers refused to pay Giraud to come from Paris the other eye went, along with the windscreen wipers and the passenger door. Ron and I, I'm ashamed to say, did not help by leaving endless deliberately illegible messages from mythical girlfriends . . .

Well — as you know — ALIEN did get made but — and you have to believe this is not sour grapes — like the DUNE story what the punters saw on the screen wasn't a patch on Dan O'Bannon's original version!

". . . an old screenplay called* They Bite . . . *was the 'embryo'* Alien.*'"



Artwork © Chris Foss. Used by permission.

"...A WHACKING GREAT BUM-BLISTERING PACKET OF PORN!"
— *SPANK*

"DEPRAVED FILTH! WE SHOULD ALL STAND FIRM AND PULL TOGETHER AGAINST THIS TIDE OF OBSCENITY"
— *THE DAILY WOBBLERS*

"TOTAL JISARAMA, MAN..."
— *DIK STRUMAR*

"I SHOT MY LOAD!"
— *GUNS 'N GUTZ*

"BETTY'S BOTTIE... HUBBER! HUBBER!"
— *THE GLUTEUS REVIEW*

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— *GAZ 'N SPUD*

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CREW'LL LIE

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THIS TIME IT'S SCRAPPED

The much-publicised ALIENS SPECIAL EDITION video — due out months ago from CBS Fox — has finally bitten the dust. Fox, who merely postponed it "for strategic reasons", have omitted to tell *any* of the magazines who promoted the damn thing the real reason *why*. Some explanations suggest themselves — such as that Ms Weaver or Mr Cameron weren't happy with the cut, or that Fox USA want to release it in America *first*, just before ALIEN 3 hits the screens, or that a brief cinema release will precede the video — but Fox are keeping mum, and most other magazines have refused to speculate. We think we should be told! If *you're* pissed off too, why not 'bug' CBS-Fox with a bunch of letters? They're at the Perivale Industrial Park, Greenford, Middlesex UB6 7RU. Have fun!

HODDER & STOUGHTON'S GREED

Er . . . sorry, *CREED*, will, like HAUNTED, be issued in a limited edition format. Rumour has it that an ultimate 26-copy edition costing between £75 and £100 will be released to certain key book dealers, although Herbert himself is said to have reserved six copies already. The boxed HAUNTED edition, which cost a more manageable £40, was Hodder & Stoughton's first foray into limited editions (prompted, we believe, by dealer Michael Anft, who snapped up many of them himself), released almost two years ago. Incidentally, SKELETON CREW were offered an extract from the new novel, but our publication schedules meant that we would have had to drop an original story to 'reprint' part of the book — not our chosen policy. The extract will now appear in FEAR magazine.

DISAPPEARED WITHOUT TRACY

SKELETON CREW's advertising campaign — which included appearances in FEAR, SPEAKEASY, A1, DEADLINE, INTERZONE, MIDNIGHT GRAFFITI, YOUR AMIGA, FILM MONTHLY, VIDEO TODAY and COMICS INTERNATIONAL — has come under close scrutiny from Warner Bros. and Walt Disney, who between them are handling distribution for DICK TRACY. This is due to a rather cheeky ad. which appeared to coincide with the release of said movie — but coincided with Disney's own advertising a little *too* well . . . Draw your own conclusions?

A WASTELAND OF PAPER

I have heard that the long-awaited third book in Stephen King's series THE DARK TOWER, which is to be titled THE WASTELAND. The value of the first two volumes — THE GUNSLINGER and THE DRAWING OF THE THREE — are expected to increase, particularly as it is now believed that THE DARK TOWER will be up to nine books long, perhaps King's *magnum opus*.

King's new story meanwhile, is *The Library Police*, a novella inspired by his son, Owen, who believed as a child that anyone keeping a library book out for too long would be persecuted by a dangerous gang of secret police!

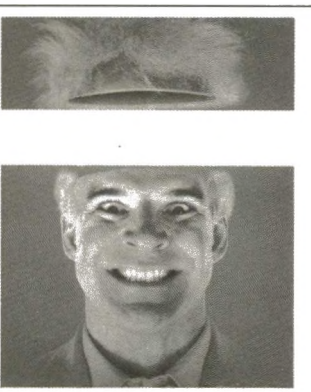
The story will be published in a new four-story collection similar to DIFFERENT SEASONS, entitled FOUR AFTER MIDNIGHT and expected on this side of the Atlantic in 1991.

DICK TRACY

SKELETON CREW

. . . OR DRAW YOUR OWN FILM POSTER

Talking of which, has anyone else noted the startling similarities between the posters for Steve Martin's THE MAN WITH TWO BRAINS and Wes Craven's SHOCKER? Anything to take the heat off *our* dodgy ads . . .



SHOCKER

THE MAN WITH TWO BRAINS

FEAR AND LOATHING IN WOODY CREEK

Crazy journalist Hunter S Thompson (aka ROLLING STONE's Raoul Duke) requires immediate cash assistance to help him fight charges of sexual assault, possession of enough narcotics to wipe out the last of the African elephants, and illegally storing dynamite — allegations which long-time friend and collaborator Ralph Steadman believes have been trumped up because Thompson refuses to follow the New Puritanism of the eighties/nineties. The SKELETON CREW editorial team, who are indebted to Thompson for his visceral writing, are making their own substantial donation and ask you to send what you can. Send donations to the *Doctor Hunter S Thompson Defense Fund, Box 74, Woody Creek, Colorado 81656, USA.* Steadman — whose cartoon genius is roughly proportionate to Thompson's writing skill — asks that cheques be marked 'Defense Fund' or else the Doc will blow the cash on evil substances. He's having a stressful time.

NOTBREED

Les Edwards' stunning poster for Clive Barker's NIGHTBREED has been dropped from the British release plans. The poster (featured in this issue's *Film Crew* section) shows some of the 'breed above Midian, with Decker standing in the foreground. It will now be used only for the European release, and British poster details are awaited.

IT'S MILLER TIME

Essential for collectors of Clive Barker books is SHADOWS IN EDEN, the long-awaited volume from Underwood-Miller, which now has a new publication date in the Autumn. SHADOWS IN EDEN is a collection of news, reviews, essays and interviews all related to Barker, and features his own illustrations throughout. As well as including "stuff even his mother doesn't know," it will, according to its editor, feature a *complete* Clive Barker bibliography for *all* worldwide editions . . .

PROVIDENCE PAYS OFF

Stephen Jones and Kim Newman are hereby congratulated for winning the coveted Bram Stoker Award for Best Non-Fiction. The two writers — both future SKELETON CREW contributors — accepted the Award for their collaboration HORROR: 100 BEST BOOKS on 24 June 1990 in Providence, Rhode Island. Further news to appear next issue.

THE EGOS HAVE LANDED

You have probably noticed, flicking through, that there is a rather large voting form on page 61, headed 'Eagle Awards 1990'. This — as the more shrewd among you may have guessed — is the official voting form for the 1990 Eagle Awards, run in conjunction with SPEAKEASY, DEADLINE, Fleetway and Forbidden Planet's busy manager Jon Harrison (have you spotted his film review yet?). The Eagles are the longest running comic awards and are not tied to any publisher, publication or store. They are presented each year at the United Kingdom Comic Art Convention (UKCAC) in September, although pressure of work forced the last (1988) organisers to miss a year. Now that Jon Harrison has agreed to handle the administrative chores, he is looking for votes — and volunteers to count them! If you fancy the job, write to him quickly at 587 St Giles High Street, London WC2! Find out which day the SKELETON CREW team are helping out, and join us for the evening! Don't all rush, now . . .

ROBOSCOOP

John Higgins — colourist on Alan Moore's WATCHMEN — is the latest comic name to join the contributors' list for SKELETON CREW 2/4, the '.38 Police Special'. He is to paint a brand new Robocop comic strip written by this issue's comic strip writer Adrian Rigelsford. Also signed are John Bolton — who will provide an original ROBOCOP 2 painting for the cover — and Frank Miller, who will be interviewed by Philip Nutman. Other features include a new introduction by Stephen Gallagher, an EDGE OF DARKNESS feature, a report from the Washington police force and a new scenario by Marcus L Rowland entitled THE DARK SIDE OF THE FORCE.

AND NOW FOR A MORRIS (MINOR)

And finally, belated congratulations to Mark Morris, who married pastel artist Nel Whatmore on 19 May this year, a mere two days after he delivered his second novel, STITCH, to publishers Piatkus.

DEAD CHUFFED

Dave Hughes and the publishers of SKELETON CREW would like to thank the many writers, artists and members of the public who visited the SKELETON CREW launch event at the Cafe Munchen on June 16 1990, making it Forbidden Planet's most successful "non-DOCTOR WHO" signing yet. Nearly five hundred people queued for up to two hours, while contributors of the first issue signed for nearly *four* hours. The private party, later on, was also a great success (but not quite as amazing as the following week's REVOLVER launch!). Especially worthy of our thanks are Clive Barker, John Bolton, Liliana Bolton, Lee Brimmicombe-Wood, James Butler, Michael W Bennent, Doug Bradley, Jim Campbell, Kevin A Cullen, Nigel Curson, Michelle Davies, Diane Dwayne, Dave Elliott, Les Edwards, Richard Emms, John Freeman, Kathy Gale, Chris Fitzgerald, Chris Fowler, Ben Goodale, Igor Goldkind, Nick Gillott, John Higgins, Jon Harrison, Mike Jeffries, Stephen Jones, Andrew Lane, David Lloyd, Mark Morris, Grant Morrison, Paul Mason, Philip Nutman, Mick Norman, Kim Newman, Mark Newton, Mike Nicholson, Matthew Pook, David Pringle, Seamus A Ryan, Sylvia Starshine, James Sewell, Lynette Stone, Jeff Snelling, Hunter Tremayne, Ann Tunnelly, Nicholas Vince, Cliff Wallace, James Wallis, Mike Wathen and Di Wathen, plus Tony, Denise, Adam and Louise from Benedict's.

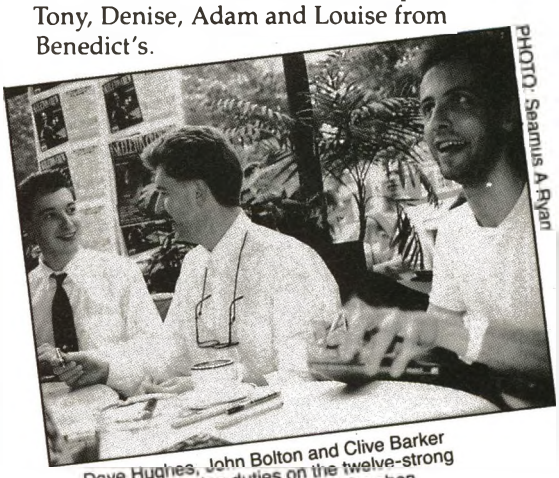
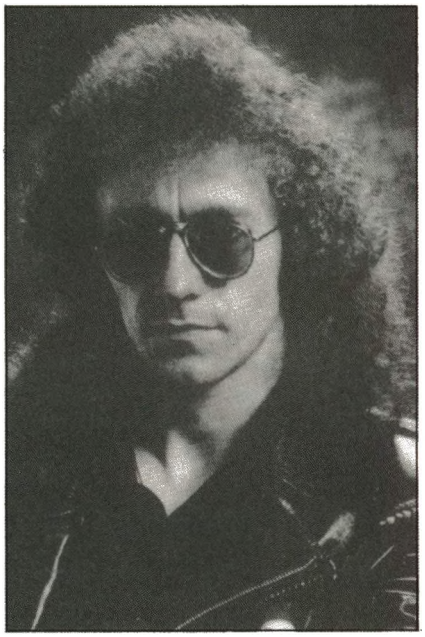


PHOTO: Seamus A Ryan

Dave Hughes, John Bolton and Clive Barker share the signing duties on the twelve-strong contributors' panel in the Cafe Munchen



Shaun Hutson is the author of *Slugs, Spawn* and *Nemesis. Soft Centre* is his first new short story for more than two years.

SOFT CENTRE

Enter the softest centre sensation. James Reece sat looking at the advertisement which took up a full page in one of the country's biggest selling newspapers. He sighed. They'd even got their advertising right.

Whoever the Hell *they* were.

You'll never taste anything like it again.

He read the shoutline again, then put down the newspaper and looked at the small chocolate egg cradled in his hand. There was a child aged about six seated across the train compartment from him, and Reece saw the child looking at him as he removed the wrapping from the small egg and considered the top of it.

The child had one too, its mouth stained brown with melted chocolate. Yet still it watched Reece as he raised the egg to his own mouth, pausing for a moment. The kid was beginning to irritate him. Eat your own, you greedy little git, he thought as he bit into the egg. The soft filling flowed onto his tongue. The child continued to look on so Reece checked that its mother was looking elsewhere then made an angry face at the prying child which rapidly averted its gaze and continued eating its own egg. Reece noted with added annoyance that it was one manufactured by his rivals.

Endless eggs.

No one had even heard of them in the confectionary business. Two weeks before Easter the shops had suddenly been flooded by the miniature chocolate eggs, the media bombarded with advertisements extolling the excellence of both the chocolate and, more particularly, the filling.

You'll never taste anything like it again.

The short line from the advert flashed into his mind again like some kind of neon splinter. Endless eggs seemed to have just the one line in confectionary. They had appeared from nowhere in time to capture the lion's share of the Easter trade, sales of their own 'soft centre sensations' (the phrase was beginning to irritate him) outstripping even the largest of the chocolate manufacturers. As Reece felt the velvet smooth filling slide across his tongue, he had to admit the damned things *were* delicious. What could his competitors possibly put into them to make them so wonderful? As an advertisement copywriter his mind was already filled with clichés to describe the taste, but Endless Eggs had done their own publicity well. So well in fact that even the firm he worked for, which was the largest confectionary firm in the country and the best known, had found the profits for the eggs, which it had practically cornered the market in, *halved.*

Hence his journey.

The train was now travelling through heavily wooded countryside, the trees closing over the swiftly moving carriages like thick arms, momentarily blocking out the light, but then, as the trees thinned out, the train began to slow down.

The station it pulled into was weather-beaten, rain dripping through holes in the platform canopy from the recent shower. The sky was still overcast and, as Reece stepped out of the carriage, he thought he heard a low, distant rumble of thunder. The sky was like wet granite.

He chewed the remains of the chocolate egg as he walked out of the station, leaping into the solitary taxi which stood on the rank outside, just ahead of a woman struggling with two heavy suitcases.

"Where to, mate?" asked the driver.

Reece murmured something and almost laughed.

"I don't actually know," he said, feeling a little ridiculous. "I'm looking for a company called Endless Eggs. Do you know whereabouts the factory is?" That was another thing which Reece and his employers found strange about their new rivals. No one seemed sure where their factory was. And yet, he wondered, how could a firm with such a huge output and such massive distribution remain hidden?

They obviously intended keeping their recipe a secret. Reece had only discovered which part of the country they operated from by following one of their delivery vans

and hunting through the driver's cab while the man had disappeared into a hedgerow to relieve himself. Even retail outlets didn't seem to know where to contact Endless Eggs. Whenever stocks were depleted it was as if the vans arrived, fully laden, via some kind of telepathic message. The secrecy coupled with their massive success was making Reece even more irritable.

"They haven't got a factory," the driver told him finally. "But I can take you to their warehouse."

No factory? Reece shook his head.

"If you could, please," he said as the car pulled away.

"Who are you then? Work for them, do you?" asked the cab driver, flipping open the glove compartment of the car.

"No, I work for a firm called Cammary's, we're in the same kind of business," Reece told him.

"Oh yeah, I've heard of them," said the cabby removing something from the glove compartment. Reece noted with annoyance it was one of Endless Eggs' confections. The driver bit into it, wiping some of the slippery filling from his bottom lip.

They drove in silence for about three miles, rain now pattering on the roof of the cab, the wind gusting occasionally through trees which flanked the road on both sides.

No factory, Reece mused, when suddenly the cab came to a halt. The driver pointed across a field towards what looked like a huge aircraft hangar. But, as he peered more closely through the veil of rain, he saw that it wasn't a field. It was a cemetery.

The driver told him that the huge warehouse was the home of Endless Eggs.

Reece thanked him, paid him and hauled himself out of the car, watching the driver wipe a tiny blob of sticky fluid from his mouth before turning and driving off.

Reece stood for a second in the driving rain, before scuttling off towards the trees and the cemetery beyond.

The warehouse loomed ahead, a massive grey building which seemed to have pushed its way up from the dark earth itself. Why here, he wondered? In the middle of nowhere and next to a cemetery for Christ's sake? There were no windows in the warehouse, no sign of workers in the muddy area around it. In fact, there was no sign of life of any description. *No sign of life.* Very funny, Reece thought while standing next to a headstone covered in mould.

A low wall separated the area around the warehouse from the cemetery and he clambered over it with ease, cursing as his feet sank into the thick mud on the other side. As he walked, the mud threatened to wrench his shoes off, but he pressed on, moving towards a door in the side of the warehouse.

He paused beside it for a second, his hand hovering over the door knob. There was no sound from inside.

No churning conveyor belts, no crashing machinery. Just a strange sound which reminded him of a bullock lowing. He listened to the rumbling for a moment, puzzled when it was periodically punctuated by a loud rasping noise. Then silence again.

Reece pulled open the door and slipped inside.

The warehouse was in complete darkness. He couldn't see a hand in front of him. All he could hear was that infernal rasping.

It was the smell which made him gasp.

Dear God, it was unbearable! He felt sick, sure he would vomit. His lunch was trying to claw its way back up from his stomach.

He stumbled in the gloom, hands held out before him like a blind man. Indeed, in the impenetrable darkness he may as well have been blind.

A second later he might have wished that he was.

The lights came on with a suddeness which made him cry out; huge banks of fluorescents exploded into life in the high ceiling above him, illuminating the warehouse and all its contents.

Everything.

Including the creature.

Reece wanted to scream, wanted to be sick, wanted to fill his pants. He wanted to do all these things at once. He knew he would.

The monstrosity which almost filled the warehouse was a sickly grey colour, as large and as bloated as a small blimp. It seemed filled to bursting point, like a gigantic boil, seething with movement which he could see through its thin, almost translucent skin.

This thing didn't defy his powers of description, it questioned his very sanity.

It seemed not to see him, but merely dipped its head forward into a metallic trough which Reece could see was filled with a thick yellow fluid. And, in that fluid, small organisms moved. Writhed and twisted like swollen obscene pond-life. He realized

they were maggots. He listened to the slurping sound as the creature drank from the trough, then, a second later, there was a loud spattering and he watched in horror as, from its rear end, hundreds of spherical brown objects spilled in a steaming torrent.

They look just like chocolate eggs, he thought and he began to laugh.

They *were* 'chocolate' eggs.

He was still laughing when the figure approached him. A tall man wearing overalls who nodded affably at Reece as if he was perfectly at home in the company of the deranged. Reece could hear his own wild laughter echoing inside the warehouse, mingling with the slurping and the spattering as more of the eggs spilled forth from their vile home.

"You're from one of the chocolate companies, too, aren't you?" asked the man in the overalls. "There was another here the other week." He smiled thinly. "Everyone wants to know my secret. What is it that Endless Eggs put in their products? And now you know." He turned towards the creature.

Reece had one more rational thought in his mind as he dropped to his knees, his sanity wiped out in one blinding moment as if it had been chalk washed from a blackboard.

The creature reminded him of a battery hen, not in appearance but in the way it fed. The trough; the food; the way it laid the eggs.

Laid the eggs.

That thought sent him into another mad spasm of laughter.

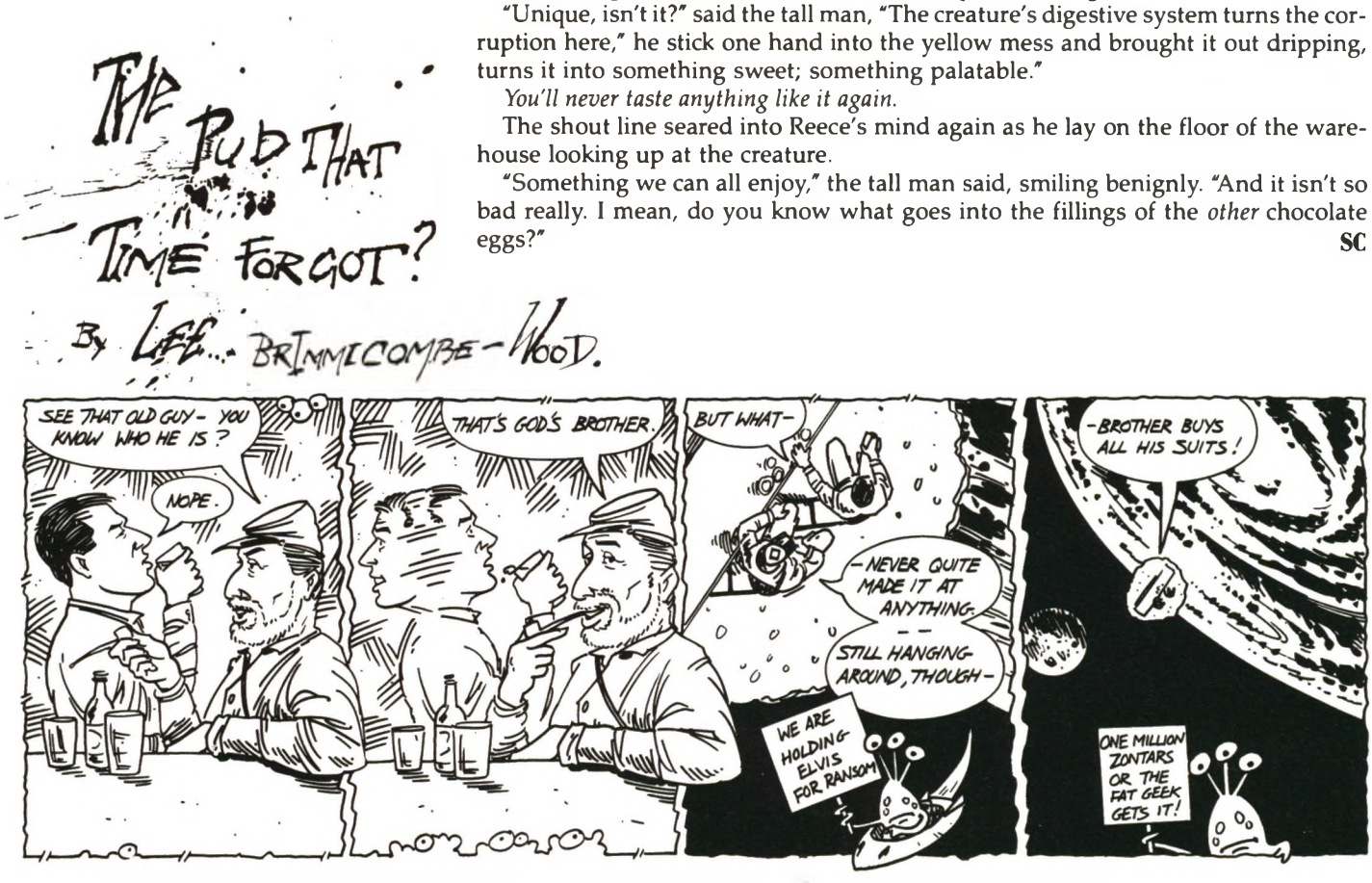
"Unique, isn't it?" said the tall man, "The creature's digestive system turns the corruption here," he stick one hand into the yellow mess and brought it out dripping, turns it into something sweet; something palatable."

You'll never taste anything like it again.

The shout line seared into Reece's mind again as he lay on the floor of the warehouse looking up at the creature.

"Something we can all enjoy," the tall man said, smiling benignly. "And it isn't so bad really. I mean, do you know what goes into the fillings of the *other* chocolate eggs?"

SC


THE PUD THAT TIME FORGOT?
By LEE... BRIMICOMBE-WOOD.
SEE THAT OLD GUY- YOU KNOW WHO HE IS?
NOPE.
THAT'S GOD'S BROTHER.
BUT WHAT-
-NEVER QUITE MADE IT AT ANYTHING.
STILL HANGING AROUND, THOUGH-
WE ARE HOLDING ELVIS FOR RANSOM
-BROTHER BUYS ALL HIS SUITS!
ONE MILLION ZONTARS OR THE FAT GEEK GETS IT!

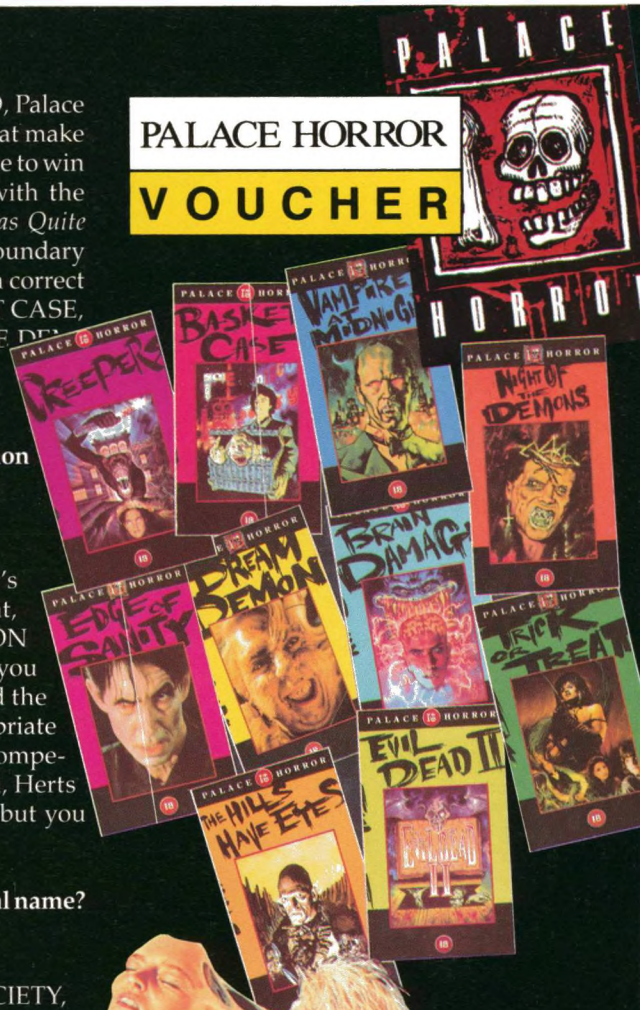
COMPETITION

£1000 Palace Video Competition

To celebrate the number one bestselling sell-through release EVIL DEAD, Palace Horror and SKELETON CREW are giving away *ten* sets of *ten* videos that make up the Palace Horror Collection — worth a total of £1000! For your chance to win a set, send the correct answer to the following question, together with the voucher below and your name and address, to: *Well, Evil Dead II Was Quite Funny, I Suppose* Competition, SKELETON CREW, Argus House, Boundary Way, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP2 7ST before 17 August 1990. The first ten correct entries pulled will receive all ten videos in the collection, including BASKET CASE, TRICK OR TREAT, DREAM DEMON, EDGE OF SANITY, NIGHT OF THE DEMONS, VAMPIRE AT MIDNIGHT, THE HILLS HAVE EYES, CREEPERS, BRAIN DAMAGE and EVIL DEAD II.

Question: Which of the movies in the collection has something in common with the theme of the next issue of SKELETON CREW?

PALACE HORROR VOUCHER



DARK STAR Competition

Unforgettable cult movie DARK STAR — horror maestro John Carpenter's first feature film — has been released recently in a sell-through format, with a stylish new jacket befitting its cult status. To celebrate, SKELETON CREW and princesses of publicity Winsor Beck liaised (ooer!) to bring you 25 free copies of the editor's favourite film of all time. To win one, send the correct answer to the following question, together with the appropriate voucher, and your name and address, to: *I'd Rather Have The Rubber Chicken* Competition, SKELETON CREW, Argus House, Boundary Way, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 7ST before 17 August 1990. The first 25 entries will each win a video, but you guessed that — you're smart.

Question: In DARK STAR, what is Sergeant Pinback (Dan O'Bannon)'s real name?

SOCIETY Competition

The most outrageous and fun horror movie of the year has to be SOCIETY, almost unanimously agreed to be *the* SFXploitation movie of all time. Now, after an impressive and unexpectedly lengthy cinema run, SOCIETY hits video (so no-one is safe) and to celebrate, Medusa Video and SKELETON CREW offer you the chance to win an amazing SOCIETY dinner jacket, perfect for those formal after-dinner shunts, together with 10 videos (worth £60+ each) and movie posters (each signed by Brian Yuzna). To win, send the correct answer to the following question, together with your name, address, chest measurement and the appropriate voucher to: *I'd Never Wear The Stupid Thing But Here Goes Anyway* Competition, SKELETON CREW, Argus House, Boundary Way, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP2 7ST by 17 August 1990. The first entry with the correct answer and a serious chest measurement will win the exclusive SOCIETY dinner jacket, a video and a poster, while the next nine correct entries will get a video or poster or both. We're like that!

Question: In SOCIETY, what special ingredient does Bill Whitney's strange girlfriend offer to add to his tea?

DARK STAR VOUCHER

D A R K
S T A R

SOCIETY VOUCHER

COMPETITION RULES: The competitions are not open to employees of ASP, Medusa, Palace, Castle Hendring nor their agents and families. No correspondence will be entered into, except with beautiful women (send photos).

DEADCREWCDAL

PHOTO: © Radio Times

Brian Blessed is well-known for his roles in such movies as *Flash Gordon* and *Henry V* and work in TV (*The Black Adder, Z Cars, The Sweeney* etc.). Here he tackles a cinematic classic, Ridley Scott's *Alien*.

It is fair to say that the whole broad tapestry of Science Fiction madly excites me, but within that context, the Science *Fiction* has to have originality and immense imagination; the cheaper kind of trash positively bores me. Any suggestions of laziness, be it in book, on film or an essay on the subject, instantly annoys me. It is, after all, an important artistic subject.

It is positively intriguing, at the present time, how good Science Fiction *and* Science Fact have somewhat embraced each other. From the earliest times of my childhood, I was brought up on a healthy ration of H.G.Wells, Jules Verne and Eric Chilton's JOURNEY INTO SPACE serials on the BBC *Home and Light* programme. The whole scenario delighted my child-like imagination, and opened up new horizons for me. This joyous experience has continued to the present day, embracing such lovely films as Steven Spielberg's CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND and all three of George Lucas' STAR WARS films, 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, and John Carpenter's DARK STAR.

The dark concept of ALIEN seemed to me to be splendidly conceived. In actual fact, I feel that the film is fifteen to twenty minutes too short. I simply found myself wanting a little more, but maybe this in itself is a good response to the film. For a long time, I had yearned for a film that would display an alien being that was a total contrast to human beings; this, I feel, the film conveys wonderfully. The star of the film, though, is the ship, inspirationally named 'Nostromo'.

The gradual build up of tension, utilising lighting to great effect, and astonishing use of music, bears into the subconcious. The sound is at least forty per cent of the film, and the film must be seen and heard in the cinema with the finest of sound systems. It is a crime to see it on video or television, for seventy per cent of the film's impact is instantly lost.

One of the film's finest features is it's mystery, and mystery is a rare commodity these days. You are constantly straining at the screen, trying to see left and right, and around the corners. You are taken on a journey throughout the ship, and you are dragged into the vortex of the director's imagination.

You ultimately become one of the crew.

Ridley Scott's amazing direction shakes the very foundations of the mind. The cast are absolutely superb; each single member, with care and imagination, is completely believable. The entire team who worked on the project, from the Costume Department and the Make-Up Department onwards, have my unstinting admiration. Giger's creation of the alien is simply out of this world, truly the stuff that nightmares are made of. It's invincibility is daunting, epitomised by the undiverted route it takes towards the ship's Captain, Dallas, as it closes in on him in the ventilation shafts. This singular straight line towards the victim reminded me of the marvellous moment in Howard Hawkes' THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD, when James Arness, as the monster, walked directly through walls and doors to get to the heroes.

The ultimate ending to the story is totally acceptable and believable, and concludes a fine film.

When the second film, ALIENS, came out, the general cry was that it was a far more entertaining film. When I questioned people about this, they embellished on the subject matter by saying that the special effects were better; hundreds of aliens and much more action. James Cameron, without any doubt, is another stupendous Director, his handling of the storyline and the atmosphere is masterly. The other prime example of his extraordinary work was THE TERMINATOR, therefore all the definitions and arguments about ALIENS were reasonably justified. Again, the splendid Sigourney Weaver led a fine cast. No stone was left unturned, and the ultimate, climactic scene, brought to an end an enormously entertaining film, *but* I preffered the first one.

In contradiction to my friends, the stillness of that opening film, and the mystery for me in its haunting quality, created a mental reaction in the audience, particularly myself, of a much subtler kind, and was consequently much more poignant. The second film tended to have an atmosphere reminiscent of a western/cowboy film. The mystery of the aliens was greatly lost, and their fighting ability was impaired. They virtually died in their dozens, and this was disappointing.

Nevertheless, don't get me wrong, it is an outstanding film and a fine achievement. Incidentally, after the first film, the contrasting idea of having the android, Bishop, on the side of the 'good guys' and operating perfectly, was inspirational. **SC**

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PHOTO: Seamus A Ryan

This month, Dave Hughes' *At Home With* series visits Stephen Harris, whose first novel, *Adventureland*, has just been published.

The House That DRIPPED BLOOD

A Clown Like Harris

I had assumed that interviewing Stephen Harris would be easy. It was, after all, his first *ever* interview, nearly two months before the publication of his first novel, ADVENTURELAND. I was wrong.

It wasn't that young Mr Harris — whose looks put him in the early thirties' category but whose musical tastes would make him slightly older — was at all obstroperous; not at all. Arriving at the Basingstoke detached house he shares with his father (who can sometimes be found "lying face down in the garden claiming to have fallen out of a plane"), an ageing mongrel named Cindy and — perhaps — his longtime girlfriend Caroline (also known as 'Florence', but "it's a long story"), I was warmly greeted with tea, cigarettes and a *reconnoitre* of his place of work — his upstairs bedroom. It also wasn't that he was in any way odd: a more regular guy you couldn't hope to meet. Nor was it his reluctance to say too much about ADVENTURELAND, for I was only part of the way through the proof copy and I suppose he didn't want to spoilt it for me.

Perhaps, then, it was the amazing transformation that took place in him after he had read the review (or "thinly-disguised damnation" as he puts it) of his first novel in CREW 2/1. Or the self-deprecating comments spoken into the recorder at any available moment ("He's a messy eater," or "He smokes too much"). Or the indecision which lead him to cunningly avoiding almost every single question I put to him. Or the unsettling air of sociopathy about him as he drove me to the day's next port of call, so that I felt I may be about to follow ADVENTURELAND's Tommy 'Tiger' Cousins into the Police's 'missing little boys' file, despite the presence in the car of Steve's disquietingly attractive girlfriend.

ADVENTURELAND: Harris' first novel

'Naive' and 'cynical' may be strange bedfellows, but they are the two words which most comfortably sum up Steve Harris. He tends to avoid *clichéd* responses: Steve's answers are not so much answers as more self-deprecating statements, as if his writing career were built on a solid foundation of insecurity. He constantly refers to 'Flo' as if she were a fundamental part of his work (and I believe that she is), admitting that he asks her to approve everything he writes. "He doesn't always like what I have to say." she says. "And then he sulks."

But what makes him tick?

"We've come to this theory between us," he says, again referring to 'Flo' as a co-conspirator, "that people don't think. The average Joe in the street doesn't consider anything whatsoever, either inside ot outside their own perspective. Consequently, people don't seem to have ideas. People always ask 'Where do you get your ideas?' Don't they have any ideas? I suppose they don't." I'm glad I hadn't asked that most predictable of interview questions. I ask instead another predictable question: where his passion for horror originates. "From my father," he says. "Even when I was a kid, there were always big omnibuses" — surely trams had been invented by then? — "with stories by H P Lovecraft and Gerald Kirsch and so on. They obviously fired my imagination."

Harris is no diplomat. Asked if he has any comment to make about Steve Gallagher's review of ADVENTURELAND, he grins evilly, leans conspiratorially closer to the recorder and says, "He's on my hit list. I'll knock his teeth out as soon as I set eyes on him." Then, to me, he jokes, "Tell him I've got a gun,

A 12-bore. Tell him my dad's bigger than his dad." He seems almost insecure about how insecure he is. "I suffer from a great deal of insecurity," he says, and brandishes a copy of the review in question: "Especially now!"

He spends the next ten minutes stopping and starting the recorder, strangely leaving the controversial parts *on* tape and turning it off for the boring stuff — the stuff, incidentally, one is usually left with by an interviewee talking on a touchy subject. Finally he sits up straight and, with the tape recorder emphatically *on*, asks if he can answer the claim that the characters in ADVENTURELAND lack motivation. He then undoes his defence by admitting that they do act "on whims." Is Steve motivated? "I think so. I mean, I do things that just seem right at the time, like the couple in ADVENTURELAND. Does that mean I lack motivation?"

Like any new novelist, he takes criticism personally. I point out that the ADVENTURELAND characters are almost *too* realistic, *too* mundane to enable the reader to believe the strange things that happen to them or go on around them. He is immediately on the defensive. "I wanted them to live and breathe. Most characters in horror novels are stiffs. I like to present a nice rounded picture of the characters so that you genuinely care what happens to them." He compares this way of writing to that in books by Shaun Hutson and Guy N.Smith. "In those books, you don't really care if one of the characters gets covered in octopusses (*sic*) or have their eyes sucked out. Not that I mind that sort of book — they're fun and you know what to expect from them".

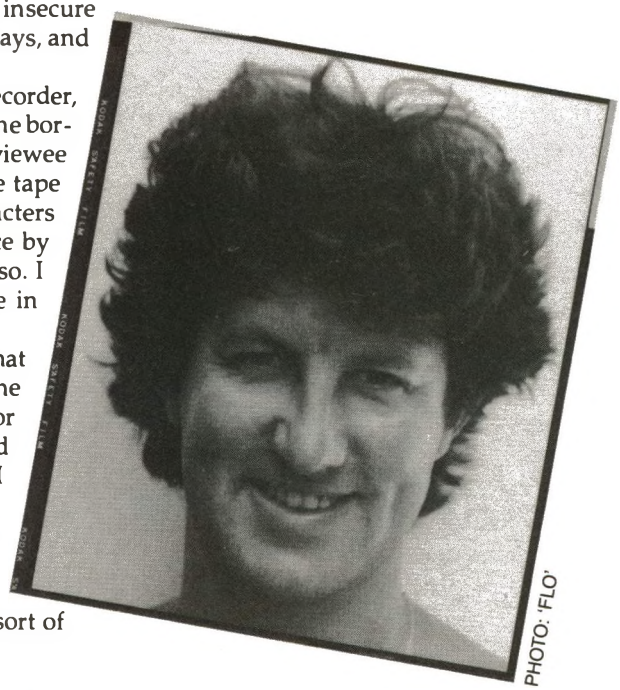

PHOTO: 'FLO'

While he waits for the other magazines to review ADVENTURELAND, which he already refers to in a past sense although at the time of the interview it had yet to be published, he is working on more short stories ("FEAR had a story of mine for over a year, and then accepted it as soon as they heard I had a book coming out") and the second novel, WULF, already snapped up by hungry Headline Books. WULF, Steve says, concerns itself with "a mass outbreak of a BSE-like disease", and I remark that if it were being published this Summer in place of ADVENTURELAND, he would probably have a topical hit on his hands. He agrees. "It's a real shame, but I've been working on it since last year, and it sometimes happens that way." **SC**

". . . people don't think. Consequently, people don't . . . have ideas."

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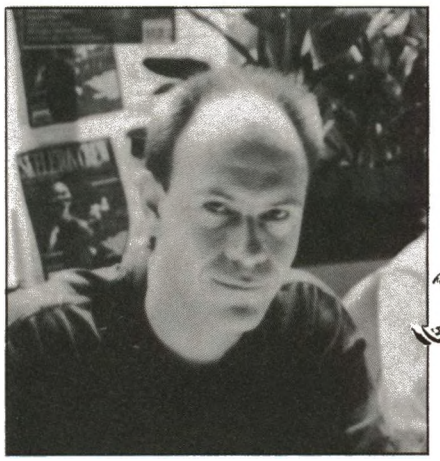


PHOTO: Seamus A Ryan

Philip Nutman, a regular interviewer for *Skeleton Crew*, talked to *Aliens* and *Abyss* director James Cameron during pre-production for *The Terminator 2*.

Loving the ALIEN

"I've always been an avid fan of science fiction, both in literature and films," admits writer/director James Cameron. It seems an obvious statement considering that the three films which carry his name in that capacity (four if you count PIRANHA II, his debut) are all in that genre, but the Canadian born film maker is in a garrulous mood as he recalls his involvement with ALIENS over a clear transatlantic line.

"The thing that struck me about the first film was its heightened sense of realism — virtually a first for a science fiction film that dealt with a completely separate environment. There have been some that have dealt with our world five years or so from now, that obviously had a realistic milleu, but ALIEN was the first movie that created an environment with real characters who spoke like real people, instead of running around in silver jumpsuits and spouting bogus dialogue. I was really impressed."

Another factor which pulled Cameron's interest was the character of Ripley and the dramatic structure that pushed her out of the Nostromo's shadows and into the foreground. "I like the forties' thing, a strong Howard Hawkes-type woman, with maybe one guy in the group really strong enough to mean anything to her. That interests me from a dramatic perspective," he explains. "A strong male character isn't interesting because it has been done and it's so *clichéd*. A weak male character has potential: somebody hasn't done it a hundred times. Strong female characters attract me because they're still relatively fresh and it's a challenge to find a balance between femininity and strength.

"There were many things that could be done with Ripley that hadn't been explored in the first film because of its dramatic structure. She didn't emerge as the main character until the movie's final third, which was a deliberate move on (screenwriter) Dan O'Bannon's part. The audience were misdirected towards Tom Skerritt as the lead because the Captain is always the guy who lives. When his character died it was a shock — just like Janet Leigh dying at the start of PSYCHO. I was surprised when I saw it, and it was scary. By that point all bets were off.

"Although it seemed obvious to me to have Ripley as the focus of the sequel, not everyone at Fox thought the same way," he explains, "but once I showed them it was an opportunity to do something dimensionally more intricate, from both a character and a dramatic position, they left me pretty much alone to take it in whatever direction I wanted."

"'Although it seemed obvious to me to have Ripley as the focus for the sequel, not everyone at Fox though the same way,' . . ."

Cameron's interest in a strong women is present in all his films (with the exception of PIRANHA II, which he dismisses whenever it's mentioned. "Your first movie is where you make all your mistakes. It'll never be worse than that . . .") and seemingly in his personal life too. In THE TERMINATOR, Linda Hamilton soon threw off her suburban secretarial manner to save herself and future warrior Kyle Reese (Michael Biehn) in the face of death from the unstoppable Schwarzenegger, eventually facing up to single parent motherhood and the fate of the world on her shoulders; in ALIENS, Sigourney Weaver becomes a surrogate mother, saves the life of the soldier she is falling in love with (Biehn again — Cameron is a faithful employer), and secures the fate of the universe — at least until the next sequel — but by the time we dive into THE ABYSS there is a degree of parity; Ed Harris and Elizabeth Mary Mastrantonio get to save each other's lives, albeit with a helping hand from their ETI buddies. Off screen however,Cameron's four year marriage to producer Gale Anne Hurd ended ironically after shooting wrapped on THE ABYSS, a movie about saving a marriage while saving lives, but he's recently remarried, this time to NEAR DARK director Kathryn Bigelow. Back in the days when Hurd and Cameron were an item, he once stated in an interview with THE VILLAGE VOICE that Gale wore the pants in the family. Reminded of this and asked who wears the pants now, "No comment" is his reply, punctuated with a soft chuckle. Since Bigelow has a repu-

tation the equal of his as a perfectionist, perhaps Cameron has met more than his match at last. And there wasn't an Alien in sight . . .

Ripley and Newt

Prior to making ALIENS, Cameron, then in his late twenties, had the shot at working on what became one of the biggest properties in Hollywood: RAMBO: FIRST BLOOD PART II. Although his script was substantially rewritten by Stallone, the story's original subtext was pure Cameron. The core of the script was the "psychological effect of being in Vietnam and the secondary drama of coming back." That same theme underscores both THE TERMINATOR and ALIENS. Regardless of how RAMBO turned out, both that and THE TERMINATOR's success lead directly to the young film maker being given virtually a free hand to make ALIENS. "Fox basically said 'Here's $18 million. Give us a call in a year once it's done.' I couldn't complain about that."

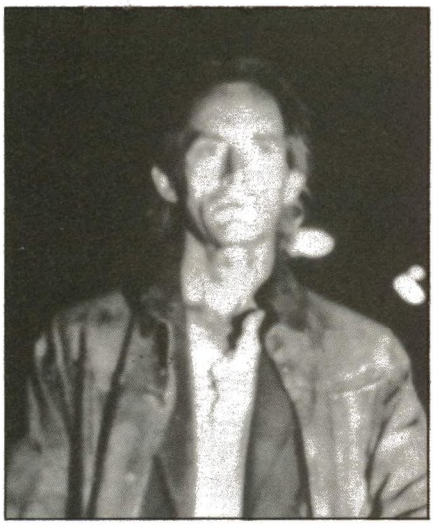
Returning to the subject of how he approached the first draft of the sequel to Ridley Scott's box office hit, he becomes animated. "ALIEN's strength was that it was so simple. ALIENS did complicate it all and I worried about that to a degree. In doing a sequel you tend to have not only everything you want to say, but everything that needs to be reiterated from the first film, so it can get overloaded. My instinct was to go for more story, character, to make the plot denser. The original was almost deliciously simple. It was an exercise in style, which Ridley excells at — look at BLACK RAIN — but that isn't my *forté*."

Cameron feels the typical state of sequels indicates a serious lack of imagination on the part of most Hollywood companies, and having been involved with three of them he speaks from experience. "There are always more ideas in a movie than there's time to explore them, so when it came to me working on RAMBO or ALIENS all I had to do was grab the ball and run with it. You don't need to look back, just head for the touch

Principal cast of *Aliens*.

down. In preparing ALIENS, I only watched the original once with Stan Winston and Robert and Dennis Skotak (THE TERMINATOR's effects team). Then, later on, I looked at sequences on video to get a feel for the creatures, what we did and didn't see, so as not to violate anything. Sequels really don't have to be second rate, but that's a studio attitude. They don't want to mess with what they see as a successful formula. You've got to understand that most sequels are made out of the love of profit, not a feeling for the original. The only sequel I can think of that was clearly made out of love for the material was THE GODFATHER PART II."

". . . most sequels are made ouf of the love of profit, not a feeling for the original.'"

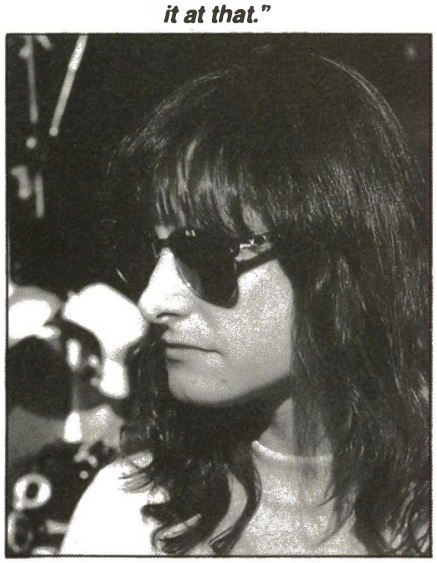


LANCE HENRIKSEN ON CAMERON

"Working with Cameron is tough going because he demands a lot. But it is very rewarding as he has a real feel for character."

MARY ELIZABETH MASTRANTONIO ON CAMERON

"Not the best collaborator, let's leave it at that."



GALE-ANN HURD ON CAMERON:

"Jim's one of the best writers of intelligent action. He doesn't just impose action on a scene, he makes it work dramatically."

Aside from developing Ripley's character, the other main element Cameron devoted his attention to was embellishing the creature's life cycle. Changes were made in relation to Dan O'Bannon's original concept but since that wasn't shown in the final cut of the picture what is presented in the sequel makes sense. The logical conclusion of the cycle posited by O'Bannon is that the human host transforms into a cocoon (revealed in the deleted scene in which Ripley discovers Dallas (Tom Skerritt) mutating in the air duct). Cameron never found that satisfying. In the first film the set-up establishes the egg, the emergence of the face hugger, the embryo implantation and the chest burst with John Hurt's character. Following on from this is the death of Harry Dean Stanton's character, whereby the audience is lead to believe the creature just kills for the hell of it only to discover, in the edited scene mentioned above, that the alien then impregnates its victims. "I think its strange to think about further victims becoming hosts," he opines. "It would be somewhat difficult for audiences to swallow because it requires the transformation of the human host. You can accept the fact the alien transforms but to have its biological properties take up residence in a human being was a direct violation of logic. You can't suspend belief that way; it's too absurd."

To take the story and the creature's life cycle one stage further, he extrapolated the concept. "The assumption I made was that if the creature was the product of an egg, what would occur if all the eggs we saw in the first movie hatched? Going beyond that, what if the organism was able to complete the cycle? There were a lot of opportunities which weren't fully realised. For example, the face hugger provides one of the tensest moments in the sequel yet it was nothing but an inert lump in the original. So I provided direct references to what had gone before but allowed the plot to dictate its own logic whilst remaining true to what we'd already seen."

In an industry filled with hyphenates (writer-director-producer), where a sense of power is often more important than real creativity, James Cameron is a rare bird, a hyphenate who is as good a director as he is a writer and a visual artist who draws on his special effects background to create impressive action scenes containing technical wizardry and physical stunts which have dramatic resonance rather than just being set pieces. Many writers who take up directing do so because they are precious about their words, finding the directoral process a chore after the liberation of putting words on paper. That's not the case for Cameron. When asked in an interview at the time of the film's release whether he preferred writing action to directing it, he responded, "Obviously it's two different things. In the writing you are completely free and the way I do it is to try and write it in real time if I can. If you'd read any of my first draft screenplays you would see I just hammer along disregarding grammar, dealing only with cursory sentence fragmentation just to get it down on paper. The reason I do that is because that's the way it cuts, as often one word is a scene change. The real satisfaction is seeing the scene cut together and the challenge is to bring it off technically. Action is very hard to do as it is a combination of 'how do you make it work' and 'how do you make it safe on set but make it seem incredibly unsafe on film?'"

When it comes to the action aspects of his films, Cameron often invests considerable time on the design aspect and on ALIENS even developed the guns used by the Colonial Marines. "As weapons are a special interest of mine I have a lot of fun designing high tech equipment that looks realistic — not too wild, but practical." To invent the Pulse Rifle he combined a Thompson sub-machine gun with a Franchi SPAS-12 pump action shotgun, and the Smart gun was based on the Spandau MG-42 combined with thermal imagery sighting. For the Drop Ship which delivers the Marines to Acheron, Cameron and his design team conferred with the American aeronautics industry to create a craft that was theoretically possible. "I don't think it's obsessive," he opines when asked about his attention to detail — a factor that considerably pushed up THE ABYSS' budget. "It's interesting from a personal perspective but essential from a dramatic perspective. When dealing with fantasy you need to ground all this stuff in reality and since ALIEN had an authentic feel to it I wanted to take that element one stage further."

Self-trained as an artist, influenced by both early Marvel Comics and the Surrealists, Cameron likes to storyboard his films. "But just for the special effects. I don't draw out material I'm going to shoot, only the material someone else has to deal with. An important part of movie making is delegating responsibility. On ALIENS there were something like 145 effects shots, which is 145 shots out of around a thousand in the film which I wasn't going to be behind the camera for. You have to be sure of the image quality on those particular shots, everything has to look right, uniformly cut together."

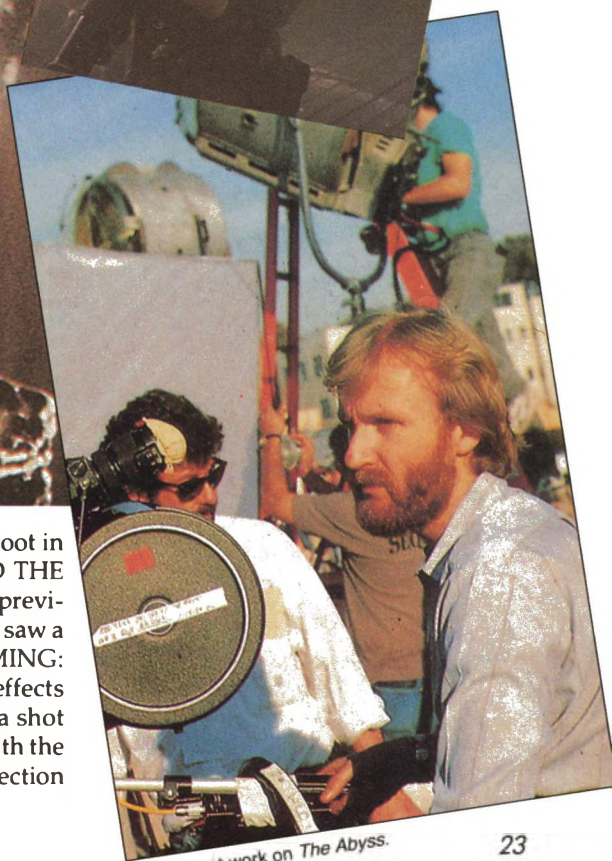
Although he had done a great deal of storyboard work on THE TERMINATOR,

Cameron took the process one stage further with ALIENS by doing the work on video. Using cardboard and foam materials the designers made small three dimensional mock-ups of the miniatures to get a clear idea of the finished effects. Cameron would then move the video camera along the angles he wanted, indicating lighting, the key angle, composition, speed and cues for editing. This saved a great deal of time and money when it came to the final work — his apprenticeship at Roger Corman's New World Pictures as an effects artist on movies like BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS, obviously paid off in spades.

Born in 1954 in Kapuskansing, Ontario, Cameron was the son of an electrical engineer for a paper company. Writing and drawing from an early age, his love of film inevitably increased when his family moved from Niagara Falls to Orange County, California in 1972, bringing him closer to Hollywood than he ever expected to get. Enrolling at Cal State University at Fullerton, where he studied physics and English for a while, he dropped out to drive a truck as a means of financing his attempted at screenwriting, eventually leading to him establishing his own effects company. "I set it up with three other people," he recalls, "to do commercials and industrial type films. I was cinematographer, effects man, editor, everything." Enough work came in for Cameron and his friends to raise the money to shoot a pilot for a science fiction feature. "It was wall to wall special effects. We had shots that I wouldn't even try now, but we were too dumb to know we weren't going to be able to pull them off. Somehow we managed, Raymond Fieldings TECHNIQUES OF SPECIAL EFFECTS CINEMATOGRAPHY was a big help."

One of Fox's Oscar-hunting advertisements, suggesting Cameron for the 'Best Director' award for *The Abyss*.

ALIENS.

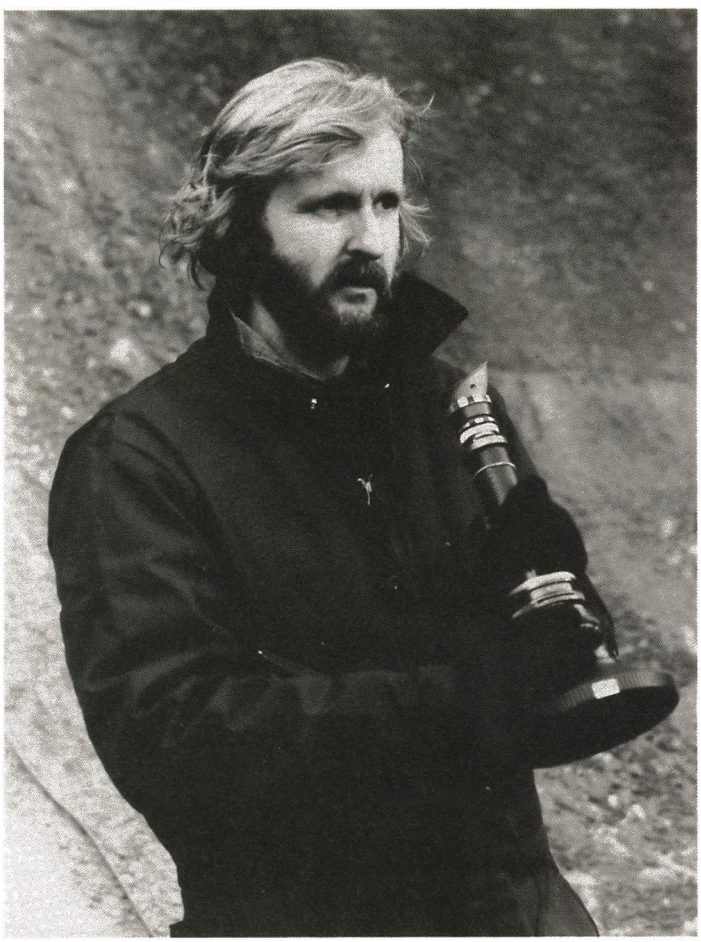

Cameron at work on *The Abyss*.

The pilot was never completed but it was enough for Cameron to get his foot in the door at New World, who were about to start on BATTLE BEYOND THE STARS, a production with a budget far larger than anything Corman had previously invested in one of his films. Starting as a miniature builder, he soon saw a way to advance. As he recalled in an interview with FILMS AND FILMING: "After a few weeks I buttonholed Roger and said: 'You've got the special effects unit over here and the actors on set over there, and there's never going to be a shot where you feel the actors are part of the action. You've got to put the actors in with the special effects. Now I happen to know all there is to know about front projection

(which I didn't but I knew I could read up on it) so how about creating a process department and I'll run it for you'. So he did."

Time and money pressures were intense, as is usually the case on Corman's productions, and Cameron often worked 36 hours straight. Other SF exploitation flicks for New World followed and he pioneered the use of styrofoam fast food trays as covering for space craft wall panels (check out GALAXY OF TERROR. Some shots and set designs accurately echo scene designs in ALIENS).

It was at New World he met Gale Anne Hurd who was working as an assistant production manager. Professional and personal concerns coincided, prompting them to set up their own production company, Tech Noir, for THE TERMINATOR. Just how influential Hurd has been on Cameron's creative development is yet to be seen, although the movies she has made without him (BAD DREAMS, ALIEN NATION and TREMORS) have not been anywhere near as successful, either creatively, critically or financially, as those made in partnership, THE ABYSS notwithstanding. During their interview with THE VILLAGE VOICE prior to the opening of ALIENS in the U.S., when asked what a producer does, Cameron quipped, "holds the director's hand". Matrimonial jokes aside, Hurd did excise considerable editorial input on his screenwriting. "Jim tends to overwrite," Hurd said at the time, a comment he agreed with. "In ALIENS we shot more than we needed," he told THE VOICE. "Gale said, 'Okay, here's a list of scenes you should cut', and we wound up cutting every single thing that was on the list."



CAMERON ON CAMERON

"I don't make a lot of friends when I'm making a movie."

ALIENS apparently had an original running time of 195 minutes, which was way too long for Fox's theatrical release plans and brings us to the question of the plan to release a special extended edition on video cassette originally due for release this Spring. Most of the reinstated footage involves Ripley's relationship with Newt and Hicks, footage of the colonists on Acheron's prior to the Aliens' attack, and details about Ripley's dead daughter. Cameron explained his reasons for cutting this particular scene in an interview with STARBURST in 1986. Apparently he didn't feel Sigourney Weaver gave a strong enough performance, "though it was okay. The problem was I felt it was too pat, too perfect. It fell into place in far too predictable a fashion. Usually I like that sort of elliptical set-up with a good pay off. We do that a number of times in the film anyway, like the Powerloader scene. I also felt it would be a more interesting relationship if we *didn't* do that . . . I didn't feel the relationship was quite as poignant if Newt was just a substitute daughter on the rebound. I didn't want her just to fill a void, but gave free range to the fact that she had survived a direct confrontation in the same way Ripley had. She was the only other one who knew what was going to happen and people wouldn't listen to her either."

It is Cameron's resistence to predictability that often gives his screenplays an edge, the desire to play with audience expectations which made ALIENS so memorable. "The last thing I wanted to do was play into audience expectations," he says emphatically. "Sequels have enough downside factors anyway, but the upside was I could take the first film and play against it. You play a game with the audience, sometimes giving them what they expect and sometimes going against the grain. The reasoning behind Bishop (Lance Hendriksen) being an android was to imply he would probably do something nasty, only you didn't know what. Having seen Ash (Ian Holm) do it in the first movie you're just waiting for Bishop to side with the Corporation. It was a red herring that was fun to play with." Of course, anyone familiar with the original picture expected the creature to be inside Mr. Jones, the cat. "Which is exactly why I didn't get into that," he adds. "That wouldn't have had any impact, because everyone was waiting for it. You've got to keep an audience on the edge of its seats."

Next issue: Alan Moore

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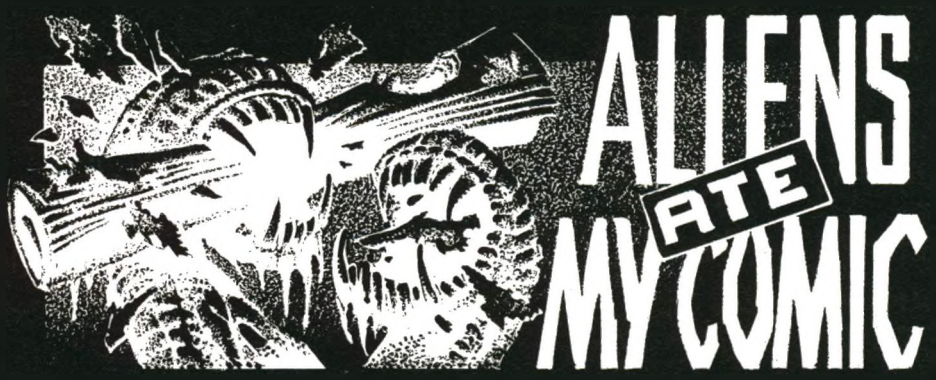
PHOTO Seamus A Ryan

Nick Gillott has *not* produced a number of television series for ITV, including the TV adaptation of Stephen Gallagher's novel *Chimera*. Well, Nick Gillott *has*, but not *this* Nick Gillott. He *does* know a bit about comics though.



The announcement that Dark Horse Comics — a previously entrepreneurial but still small American publishing company — were to produce a series of comics based on ALIENS was greeted with much apprehension. Could a mere comic achieve the sheer exhileration that is James Cameron's *meisterwerk*? The jury is still out, but certainly writer Mark Verheiden has expanded the rich background of ALIEN/ALIENS still further.

The story us set ten years after the film. The existence of the aliens is still unknown to the general public. Hicks — physically and mentally scarred after the events on Acheron — is in jail on another drunk and disorderly charge. Newt, still legally a minor, also has problems adjusting after her return and is in a mental institution. Ripley's fate is merely hinted at: "Well you know what became of her". (Although she does turn up before the second comic series finishes.) An alien has been discovered in an old space wreck floating in orbit around Earth, and the only survivor — with face hugger in tow — commandeered by the military for biowarfare study. The embryo turns out to be a queen and the military establish that an empathic link exists between her and her drones. Certain Earthbound 'sensitives' pick up the queen's messages and start to dream of their mothers, each dream ending with the image of the alien queen. One of these psychics is a mentally unstable religious nut who forms the Church of the Immaculate Incubation, hoping to share the birth experience both the infected soldier and his wife will soon 'enjoy'.

During this time, the military deduce the location of the alien homeworld and form a party to investigate. Hicks is consequently given the chance to redeem himself by taking part, but he soon blots his copy-book by smuggling Newt — who he has rescued from an involuntary lobotomy — on board the craft. Their departure is soon followed by a ship belonging to genetics firm Bionational, who also want to reach the aliens' homeworld — their corporate logic being that the aliens will be *passe* within five years, and whatever preys on the aliens on their own planet will be the next big thing in bioweapons. They buy off Hicks' commander and thus sow the seeds for Mankind's destruction.

THE CREATURE WATCHED PASSIVELY, HOVERING PROTECTIVELY OVER IT'S BROOD.
WE HAVE COME TO CONSUMMATE OUR LOVE—TO PURGE THE VISION FROM OUR MINDS—
—TO BE ONE WITH YOU.

BOOK ONE Artwork for the first series, by Mark Nelson

The religious fanatics break into the military base holding the queen and her brood, offering themselves to face the huggers so that a new 'hive ' can be formed. Bionational use the captured Marines as live bait to attract the aliens — or whatever preys on them. Their plans go awry, however, and Hicks, Newt and the remaining Marines escape to Earth, little knowing the catastrophe that has befallen Mankind . . .

Thus ends the first (and, as originally intentioned, last) book of ALIENS Mark Verheiden style. Originally presented as six black and white comics, with painted colour covers and a few colour ads inside, ALIENS Book One was artworked by Mark A Nelson, who SKELETON CREW readers might remember from his illustrations for Stephen King's *Raimy Season* story in MIDNIGHT GRAFFITI #3. Nelson's (and therefore Verheiden's) only real drawback is that he does not have the skill at figure work that a comic book demands. He has the eye for a good scene, and he can undoubtedly render the aliens brilliantly, but his pencil work is not quite up to scratch. His artwork seems to slip towards the end of the series, and many were — with all credit to Nelson for making the series catch on — glad to see a colour format replace Nelson's art with that of Denis Beauvais for the second series.

In this — restricted this time to just four comics — Verheiden's story charts the Marine team's return to a ravaged Earth, arriving just as the military are planning to use the 'Ripley Maneuver' — taking off and nuking the place

BOOK TWO: Denis Beauvais' stunning colour work for the second series.

from orbit. Unfortunately for our heroes the evacuation plans don't include the general populace and they are forced to stow away on a ship (curiously named after one of Verheiden's other comic creations, THE AMERICAN) which turns out to be headed for a military base lead by General Spearsm who is slightly annoyed to discover that the alien specimens *The American* was carrying have been damaged (by Hicks and Newt, of course!). Spears' plan is to turn alien against alien by using aversion therapy, but once again the military's plans don't quite work out and the survivors finally turn to the only person who can really help them — and, you've guessed it, she looks a lot like that actress in GHOSTBUSTERS and HALF MOON STREET.

These are the bare bones of the first two Books, both of which have now completed their runs. Mark Verheiden's cyberpunk-ish world-gone-crazy background is deliciously complex, with corporations running everything including the military, four thousand channel TV with anybody allowed to broadcast, companies using the excuse of 'free enterprise' as an excuse to do whatever they want, and the government paranoid about anything and everything; the short term profit rules the day — these last three points not too far removed from Britain's own current situation. Some of the characters make Carter Burke (from ALIENS) look like genial old Clive Dunn. All this is a recipe for disaster via the domino effect: discovery of one alien leads to the end of Earth as we know it. Verheiden's fatalistic writing is reminiscent of much of Jamie Delano's exemplary work on another fine series, HELLBLAZER. His treatment of the major characters is excellent. Newt has traumatic nightmares about her experience on Acheron which lead to her being locked up in the aforementioned institution (she has no legal guardian — a place where the mother-daughter emphasis of ALIENS seems to have fallen apart in the comic, that is, why doesn't Ripley want her?), the treatment to bring her out of her withdrawal simply forcing her deeper into herself. Hicks is caught in a vicious circle too, but of his own making. Having never overcome the loss of his fellow Marines, he turns to drink, his feelings of loneliness, frustration and inadequacy compounded by the facial scarring that leads to people shun him (another flaw here, surely? The movie Hicks was far too resilient to end up like this, even towards the end of the picture. And what of his feeling for Ripley? Would she have rejected him so coldly after their return to Earth?). And does the fact that the only way for Hicks and Newt to carry on is to face their fears seem a little too easy a way out? Wouldn't a more effective scenario have them pitted against the threat to Earth unwillingly and along with everyone else?

These flaws aside, Verheiden uses many of the techniques of the films to varying effect. His dream sequences owe more to David Lynch than James Cameron, and although these and the flashbacks provide some of the comics' most startling imagery, it becomes a little unclear what exactly you are reading. Further readings clear things up, however, and the Books certainly hold up to repeated looks. These confusing effects are lessened in the second series, as the comic builds more definitely towards its climax, however this acceleration of the plot brings with it a polarization of the characters, making them more one-dimensional. It may be that the success of Book One forced Verheiden into producing the second series before he was ready. Beauvais' work reflects this in places — particularly in his rendering of the hardware — although his work on the alien is nothing short of incredible.

The aliens themselves aren't really the 'bad guys'; as with Ash in ALIEN and Burke in ALIENS, the main villains are human(oid). The aliens merely lurk in the background, a brooding menace that no-one can ignore. Further insight into their life cycle is provided by Verheiden, which gives more credibility to their resilience, but they are no way softened in either story.

Dark Horse, in addition, obviously intend to use their valuable licence to the full: Book Three is already in progress, and is due for a September 1990 release, and the long-awaited and promising ALIENS vs. PREDATOR was previewed recently in DARK HORSE PRESENTS, the publisher's monthly anthology comic. All in all, Dark Horse's ALIENS is a fine addition to the expanding mythos and will be especially worth reading now that ALIEN III sets are being constructed at Pinewood Studios. So go ahead and take the plunge into Mark Verheiden's nightmare world.

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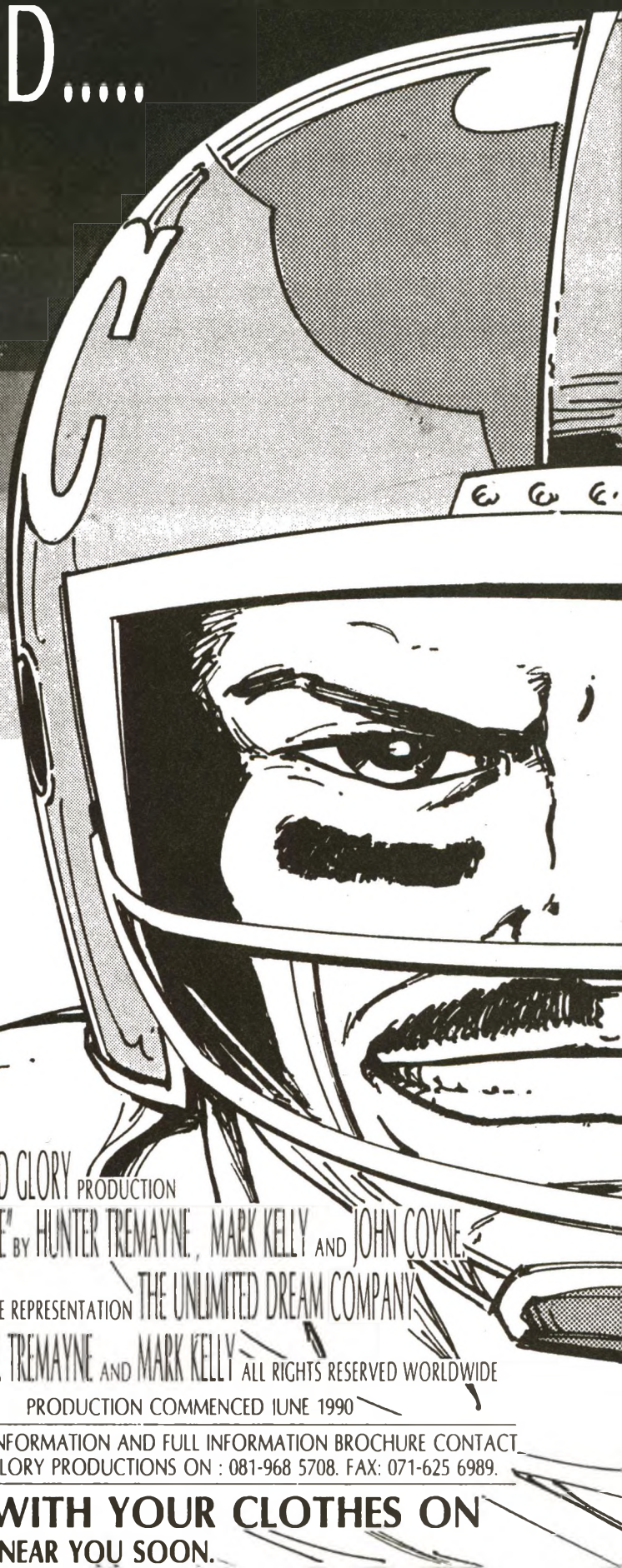

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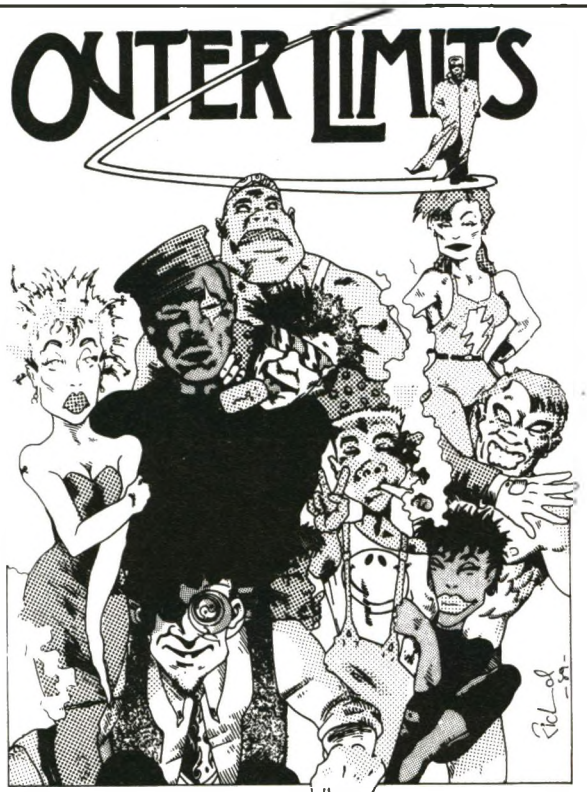

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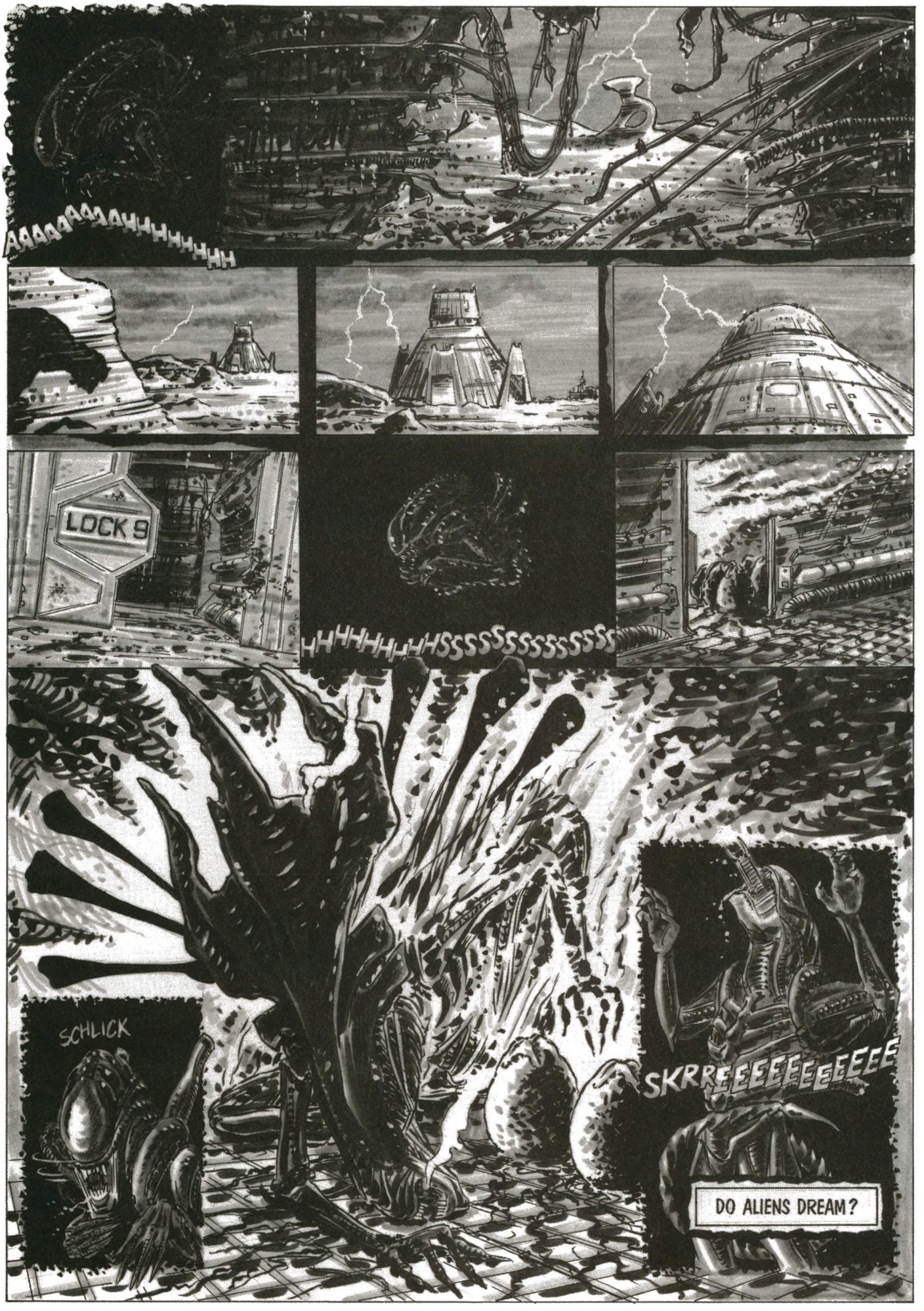

AAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHH
LOCK 9
HHHHHHHHSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
SCHLICK
SKRREEEEEEEEEEEE
DO ALIENS DREAM?

Film Crew

ROBOCOP 2

Directed by Irvin Kershner

Script by Frank Miller and Walon Green
Starring Pete Weller, Nancy Allen

Stylised violence clashes head-on with Frank Miller's gruesomely dark wit as the chrome plated Murphy (Pete Weller) returns to duty. It's now a year later. Old Detroit is yet again on it's knees, and a vile drug is flooding through the black markets. Addiction to 'Nuke' is instantaneous and with ever increasing prices, a crime wave wreaks havoc as helpless 'Nuke-Heads' steal to pay for their vice.

Tom Noonan's villainous drug baron keeps the flow steady, until a certain man with a stainless steel conscious sets about 'cleaning up the streets'. The Underworld fails to appreciate this and throws everything it's got at Murphy and the doggedly faithful Lewis (Nancy Allen), but it's only when an improved and fiendishly lethal Robocop arrives that Murphy faces a real problem. Towering above Murphy, the multi-limbed automaton's determination is as unrelenting as it's endless supply of weaponry, and the film's conclusion can truly be termed as the 'Fight of the Decade'.

Undoubtedly, it would be an understatement to say that Kershner's style is subdued compared to Verhoeven, but where the gore content may be nowhere near as high as the first film, the stunts and graphic light sequences are every bit its equal. Phil tippet's realisation of the rival Robocop is remarkable, the stop-motion blending in perfectly with sequences of a barely animate life-size version, and there's even a cameo appearance by an ED-209. Miller has not just written a sequel, he's embraced and enhanced the concept as a whole; roll on ROBOCOP III from the same pen.

GREMLINS 2

Directed by Joe Dante

Starring Zach Galligan, Phoebe Cates
Christopher Lee

They're back, and this time they want to party! With the seemingly relentlessly inventive mind of Joe Dante at the helm once again, Gizmo and his offspring are drawn together in the big city as mayhem breaks loose.

Billy Peltzer and his beloved Kate have left the shattered tranquility of Kingston Falls to try and build careers in Manhattan, both ending up with jobs at the vast Clamp Centre. Cue John Glover's Daniel Clamp in a blatant parody of Donald Trump, the multi-millionaire. The shop where the elderly chinaman kept Gizmo (there's the briefest of cameo's by Key Luke) is destroyed, and before you know it, the Mogwai is reunited with Billy once more.

Gremlins duly arrive, and Christopher Lee's money obsessive scientist, head of the 'Splice O' Life Designer Genes Centre', takes it upon himself to genetically engineer an improved version of Gizmo. That's when the chaos really begins.

Paired with Rick Baker's astounding creations in latex, Dante's imagination runs riot, with everything from mutant gremlins to transvestite gremlins putting in an appearance at some point during the proceedings. No longer are they just identical — personalities have been introduced and physical characteristics that distinguish them from each other: Daffy, Dump, the double act of George and Lenny (inspired by OF MICE AND MEN) and Stripe's ancestor, Mohawk, who, predictably, is not the friendliest of creatures.

An inspired sequel that surpasses the original, yet complements it perfectly at the same time.

Adrian Rigelsford

NIGHTBREED

Directed by Clive Barker

Starring Craig Sheffer, David Cronenberg, Ann Bobby, Charles Haid

"This is too weird," one of the characters says some way into this extraordinary movie. The audience has already sussed that, however, and have moved on to revel in the artistic audaciousness of NIGHTBREED, the most imaginative fable committed to celluloid since STAR WARS, with which it shares its matte artist, epic scale and plethora of fantastical creatures.

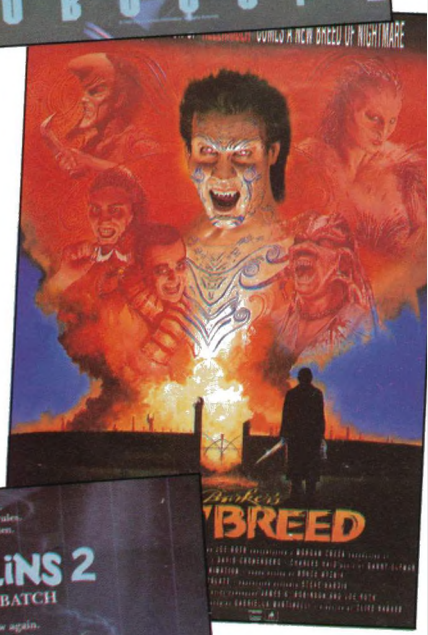
Previously mistakenly categorised as a horror movie maker (after directing the ground-breaking HELLRAISER), British *enfant horrible* Clive Barker demonstrates another side of his imagination (which is as rich and dark as a cup of Gold Blend — and twice as hot) with this adaption of his own novel, CABAL.

The story begins with Boone (Craig Sheffer) being convinced by his psychiatrist (director David Cronenberg, here in his third movie role) that he is a serial killer. Fleeing to the fabled city of Midian — where, legend has it, monsters will be accepted and sins absolved — he is pursued by girlfriend Lori (Ann Bobby), the *real* psychopath (Boone is innocent) and a squad of hick police, lead by Sherriff Eigerman (Charles Haid, better known as Renko in HILL STREET BLUES). Boone is taken in by the nightmarish but sympathetic (in both senses of the word) inhabitants of Midian: the Night Breed. His pursuers catch up with him, however, and he is forced to fight with the monsters in their most important battle ever: the fight against narrow-mindedness and bigotry. . .

It is difficult to begin to describe the sheer scope and concept of NIGHTBREED. It is overtly an action-adventure monster-movie, but it is also touching, tragic, empathic, funny, dramatic, brilliantly staged and breathtakingly photographed. While the special effects show a certain charming fallibility, the make-up is easily the best in cinema history. The fact that much of its crew and most of its cast are British hasn't seemed to help the movie in the States, but if it only received a fraction of its deserved audience there, that merely proves the lack of imagination and depth of the average movie-goer.

This movie will be enjoyed by young and old alike and, like STAR WARS, it will bring out that rare and elusive human quality: a sense of wonder.

Dave Hughes



TOTAL RECALL

Directed by Paul Verhoeven

Starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, Ronny Cox and Michael Ironside

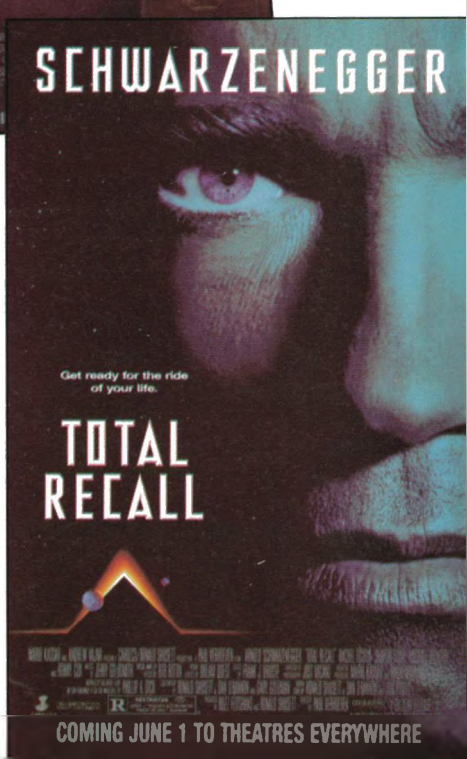
War movies, haunted house movies, westerns and slasher movies have all, in the last decade, found themselves set in outer space. Refreshingly, TOTAL RECALL, is a 'pure' S.F. yarn — the story could not be told in any other genre.

Schwarzenegger, in his most three dimensional performance yet, is Doug Quaid, a humble, Earthbound working stiff troubled by dreams of the planet Mars. His desire to understand the dreams (of an experience he has never known) lead him to an artificial implant substituted by a shadowy intelligence organisation. Quaid's quest for his true personality progress to sleazy Mars, a planet held in the grip of the ruthless Cohaagen (Cox). Cohaagen controls the planet by monitoring the oxygen supply as well as the cops on Quaids trail.

As one would expect from director Paul Verhoeven (FLESH AND BLOOD and ROBOCOP), the action is frequent, fast and bloody — often unnecessarily so. However, the shoot outs, fisticuffs and chases are the counterpoint to a complex and gripping mystery thriller, marred only slightly by the intrusive conclusion which brings Quaid to an alien created oxygen manufacturing plant. The human story is powerful enough to carry the film, however, but the climatic effects feast is oddly unsatisfying.

Does it look like 'the most expensive movie ever made'? Absolutely! Virtually every shot is a stunning visual effect, and Rob Bottin's mutant lowlife are a delight. Don't wait for the video — do this movie justice by seeing it on the biggest screen and the best sound system in your town — and do it before anyone tells you Arnold's true identity!

Jon Harrison



"Don't worry, darling. You'll get your copy some day..."

SKELETON CREW

could be just what the Doctor ordered, so give page 3 a quick check-up and get your subscription in to ASP, ASAP! It's the best medicine.

Q: What do the following authors & artists have in common?

Douglas Adams Brian Aldiss Isaac Asimov Iain Banks Clive Barker David Brin John Brosnan Jim Burns Ramsey Campbell Angela Carter Joy Chant Simon Ian Childers Adrian Cole Edmund Cooper Louise Cooper Richard Cowper Roger Dean Terrance Dicks Thomas M Disch Stephen Donaldson Harlan Ellison Chris Foss David Gemmell David Gerrold William Gibson Charles L Grant Harry Harrison Frank Herbert James Herbert Philip E High Robert Holdstock Shaun Hutson Diana Wynne Jones Jeff Jones Peter Jones Mike Kaluta Colin Kapp Leigh Kennedy Bernard King Nigel Kneale Harry Adam Knight Katherine Kurtz David Langford Stephen Lawhead Anne McCaffrey Ian Marter Rodney Matthews Michael Moorcock Chris Morgan Larry Niven Frederik Pohl Jerry Pournelle Terry Pratchett Christopher Priest Robert Rankin Kim Stanley Robinson Michael Scott Rohan Geoff Ryman Josephine Saxton Bob Shaw Robert Silverberg Brian Stableford Theodore Sturgeon Patrick Tilley EC Tubb Lisa Tuttle Freda Warrington Ian Watson Tim White David Wingrove Gene Wolfe Patrick Woodroffe Berni Wrightson Jonathan Wylie

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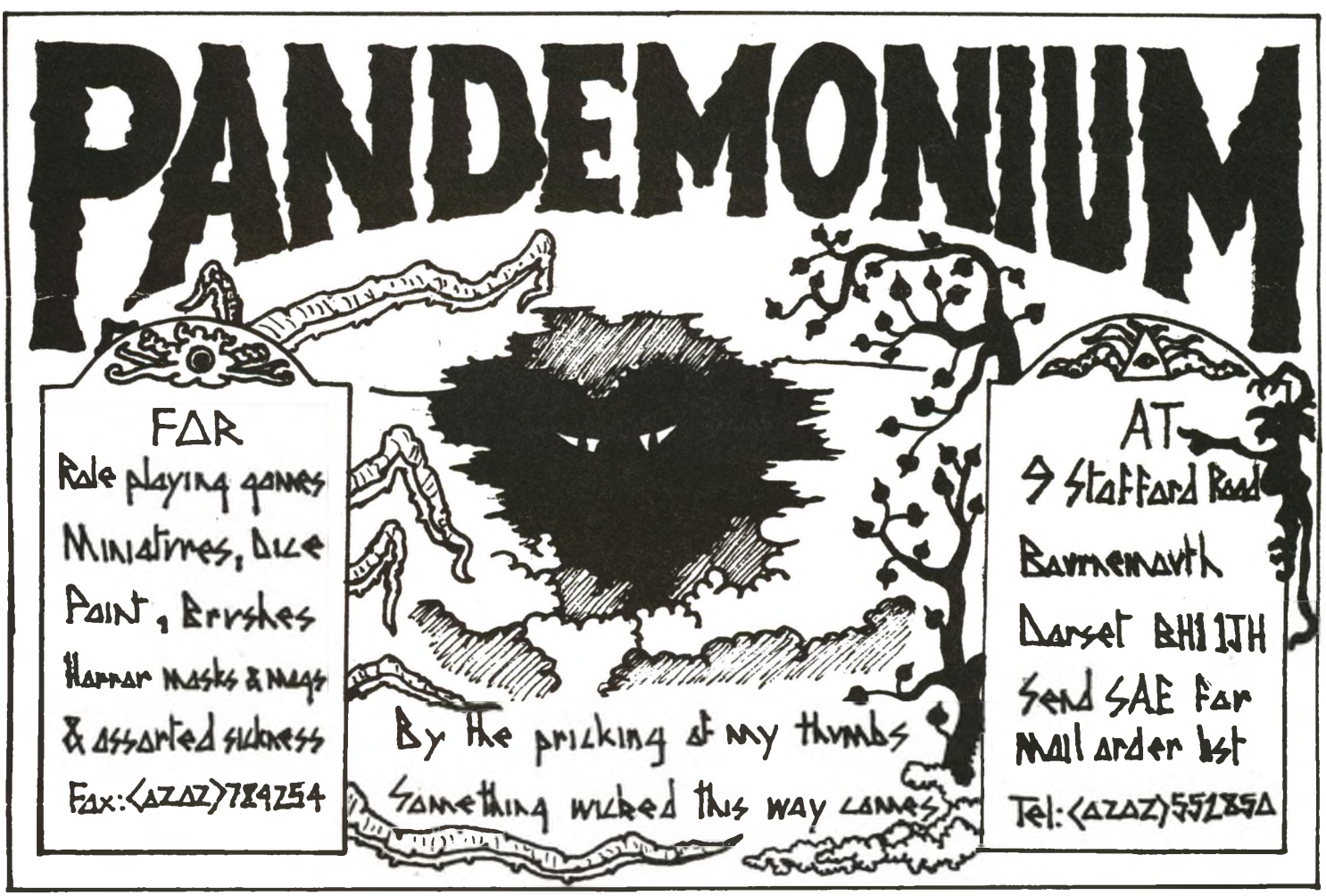

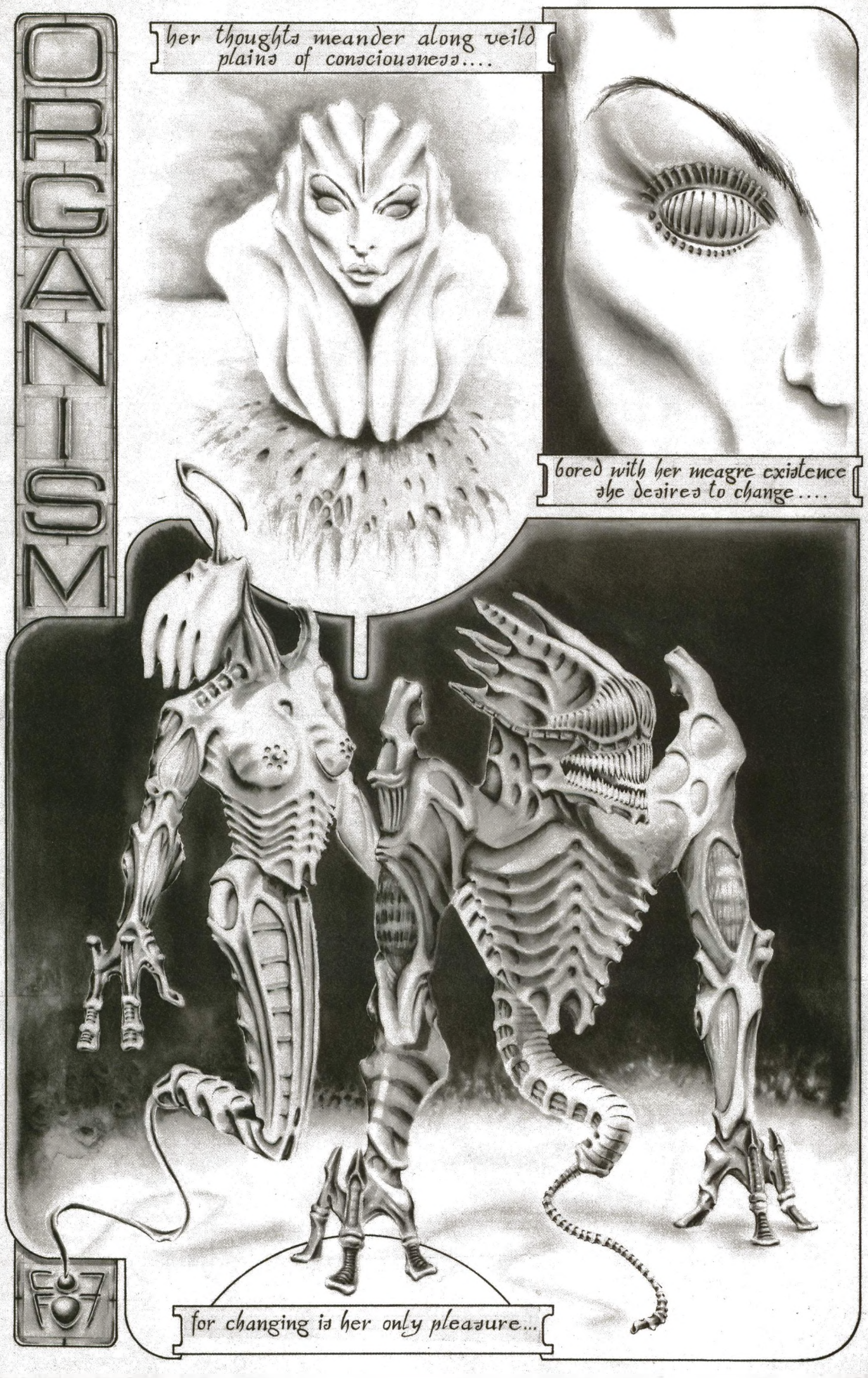
ORGANISM
her thoughts meander along veild plains of consciousness....
bored with her meagre existence she desires to change....
for changing is her only pleasure...
F07

Calamity

COMICS AND VIDEOS

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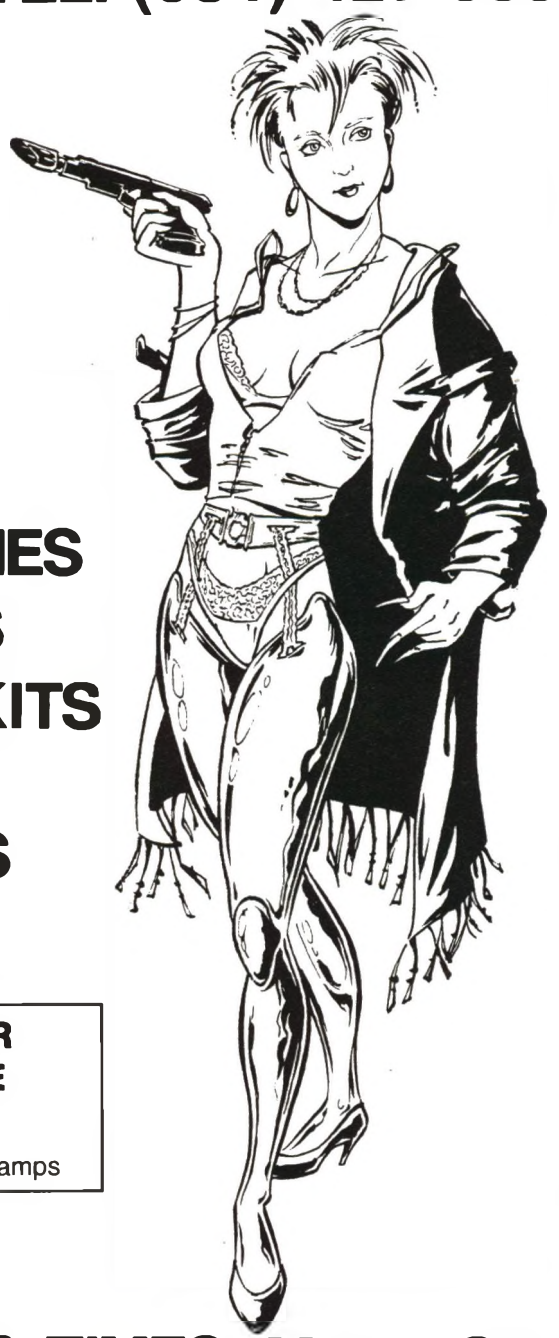

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the Beast in Beauty

Mikey likes The Hunt, armoured in his designer armour, his designer body, and hunger for the ache of danger. Touch the membrane tatooed 'danger', feel it give as you dare yourself; the warning flashes and you tense the excitement, play with it, let it build until it carries you through the meniscus; drink the draught of horniness and reach to sleep with the gods. Mikey likes to hunt.

Since the poisoned blood, he is, of course, more careful. Protection, extra strength, faintly outlined in his back pocket.

He pads the shadows: his red Reeboks, black and fluorescent cycling shorts, tanned skin, bright eyes, eager looks an invitation to the soft, sweet, salt-sweat smelling, muslin-soft Shadows on the blasted Heath.

Both Hunter and Prey pray for that touch and reassurance, pray they're safe and pray you don't leave alone. Match your looks against the measure of the Shadows, Youth an advantage, nineteen years your ally; a pleasing smile your weapon to *stab stab stab* to the heart of their terror of rejection.

Steps into a clearing, under the full moon; a glimpse of fairyland. A few steps and he doesn't know why he pauses, looks up, looks at the moonlight bathing the trees, casting Shadows, casting runes and dice, it's all chance. Chance you'll win, chance you'll lose and chance, I mean, it's happened to friends, lots of friends, happens all the time — you'll meet, you just might meet . . . your Dark Prince, your dream, your true true love, cleaving unto you only, till death do you part, and for a butterfly — death is tomorrow.

Mikey looks at the moonlight bathed grass, and smiles. No; never happen; not here. This is the place of Passion and Anonymity and that; has nothing to do with Love. Love is Friendship, and here you don't ask names.

The spirit he's drunk sways him, makes him feel that the only reality is touch, the only touch your body against the hot summer night air and the craving for another — not to share but to supply.

The moon bathes the grass and trees in its milky light.

'Has,' Mikey wonders, 'has anyone ever: "bathed in moonlight"?' and the thought, stumbling, stems the flood. If not, then he will be the first, and if not the first, then every fruit must be tasted.

He lifts his beauty to the pock-marked Moon and runs his palms up across his face and through his hair, as a man who, spitting the water of the shower, shakes himself from last night's pleaures.

He slowly rubs his hands across the back of his neck and across his chest, his hands slicked by the jewels of sweat. He watches, and the muscles of his stomach shift as he moves his hands across them. Stretches an arm towards the moon and protects himself from the beating moonbeams, blinks them from his eyes as he turns his head and soaps with the clearest soap the pit of his arm, and sees the fine hairs on his fore arms, washed in drops of moonlight, plate his skin in silver; and he does not pause in running his hands over his body, and he does not pause, as he becomes aware of the music.

It is just beyond the touch of hearing; the substance of passion's breath, the sound of dust scraping across the fibre of the reed. An aeolin fluid so subtle it flows with his blood and he's not sure if he's moving *to* the music, or *with* the music — or is the music moving him? Who is the dancer and who the dance? And he *can* touch the music, and his movement becomes faster, and now he's dancing, and the Music is approaching, and he wants to meet it, and he leaps and lands and turns, and looks at the dark trunks of trees, and he can hear the music approaching, and he sees a figure and he rushes to it, and he stops.

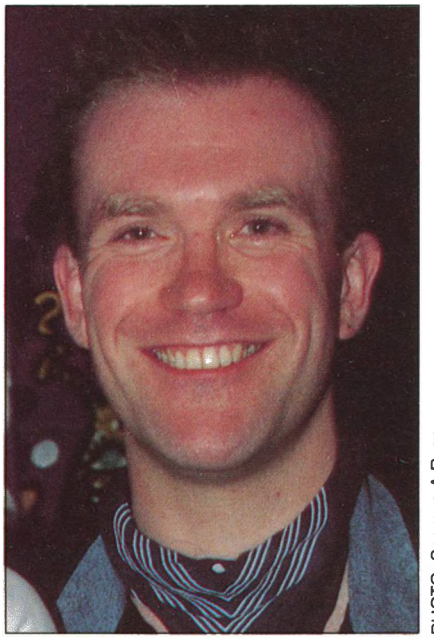

PHOTO: Seamus A Ryan

Nicholas Vince, who played Chatterer in the *Hellraiser* movies and Kinski in *Nightbreed*, has written for *Cheval Noir*, *Fear* and the *Hellraiser* comic. *The Beast In Beauty* was inspired by John Bolton's painting on page 35.

". . . the substance of passion's breath . . ."

the Beast in Beauty

And he's suddenly shy.
And the Music continues.
And he says — 'Hello'.
And the Music approaches.
And Mikey's invitation is accepted.
And the Music continues.

Sirens, thought Sylvia, were mysterious entrancing women, who lured men onto the rocks by the beauty of their song. Whoever named the machines that emit a banshee wail, to warn of approaching authority or help, was either a lousy scholar or had a sense of the ridiculous.

She tried to nourish the thought, but the vision of the remains rose and she wanted to vomit. Again.

'Okay, Hughes, you can turn that fucking thing off now — we know you're here,' called a middle aged man in a sports jacket.

'Sorry, Miss,' said the young detective constable, smiling apologetically. He was standing; she was sitting on a fallen tree, so she had to look up to reply.

'It's alright, honey. I've heard worse.'

A difference in their accents — his polite British, hers Mississippi — brought the bile of homesickness.

She took a long drag on her cigarette and hated the taste of it. She noticed him watching her look of distaste. She smiled, 'Sure was a bad day to give up smoking.'

He chuckled. It was a pleasant sound. She looked closely at his face, trying to erase that other. She noted the freckles, dark brown eyes and assumed he could be no more than twenty-five or so. He was smartly dressed and reminded her of someone from 'Brideshead Revisited'.

'What's your name, honey?'

'Benjamin. Uh, Ben Price, Miss Carroll.'

'Are you . . . married?'

'Un, no.'

He looked embarrased, wary of the danger of an emotional attachment formed whilst she was in shock. Some men carry their boyishess well, and this Ben was one of them. She wanted to hold and protect him, and imagined he'd love with an intense boys' passion. Passion to prove you're a Man — you can give pleasure, so you're a Man. Soon spent, but flattering. She'd never wanted so to be held. She wanted warm breath on her neck, comforting love nothings and a physical statement that she was still really *here*. But the only breath on her neck was a cloying breeze and she pictured, instead, the hooded skull that so wanted to embrace her.

She shivered and looked behind her. The pulsing blue lights on the police cars obliterated the moon light, the ghosts of trees shown and dismissed.

'All right?'

She looked back at him. He'd crouched in front of her so their eyes were level.

'Yes. Just imagining things.'

'It's the shock, I expect. Look, that was the Doctor arriving. I'll see what's happening. Try and get you away from here. I'm afraid they'll want you down at the Station for a statement. Will you be all right for a few minutes — on your own?'

'I'm not sure I'll ever be "all right" again.'

She looked down and shook her head.

'Forgive me: I'm just being melodramatic. It's that good old Southern belle blood of mine. Momma always said I shoulda gone on the stage.'

'I can stay if you'd prefer . . .'

'No, no: you go on, honey. I'm gonna have to deal with this soona or later — might as well be now.'

He walked quickly to the older man in the jacket. They both turned and looked at her as they spoke.

She didn't like the way the jacket looked at her. His eyes moving across her body reminded her of a fried egg as it haltingly slips from the pan onto the plate.

'Well, Sylvia Carroll,' she muttered to herself, 'your Momma always told you — "The Lord God gives you a blessing, he gives you a curse".'

Her beauty. Her accursed beauty. Women hated her and men assumed she was dumb, though she wasn't blonde. She should be grateful. She knew she should be grateful. Jesus, she was sure feeling sorry for herself! Come on girl, you're letting this get to you — think positively: your modelling career paid for this trip to London, and you've your own agency, all 'cause of your beauty.

And she'd found, or been found by, David. She missed him. Widowed a year since and she was still wandering around, like she had a limb missing.

She remembered their meeting at 'Ole Miss'; the university in Oxford, Mississippi, one lunch break in fall.

Illustration © 1990 John Bolton

He'd just kept staring at her and smiling every time he caught her eye. Long brown hair, a dimple in his chin. Perhaps he was slightly fat in the face, but he was only in first semester; he'd thin out. Besides, his grey eyes kinda made her tremble. And she liked the way he looked in a cut off T-shirt. He stroked his belly and stoked a fire in her.

He was sitting with others, though the jocks and their talk of try outs and ballin' girls didn't seem to interest him. And they didn't appear to notice his inattention to their talk: he was still part of the group, still liked by the others. At first, his constant staring had made even her nervous, and she was used to boys staring at her.

Eventually he got up, walked towards her, sat opposite her, continued to stare at her smile.

'I'm going to be a famous photographer and I want to photograph you,' he'd said.

She'd laughed out loud, clutched her books to her chest, in disbelief at his audacity.

'Well, Mercy! Do you use that line on all the girls? And do they believe you, Mr High and Mighty Famous Photographer? Or did you think I look so gullible, it might be worth a try?'

'None of the above,' he'd said, 'and if you'd like to come, with a chaperone of course, to my room, I can show you.'

Then he'd smiled again, passed her a note with his name and number, got up and returned to his friends. They'd immediately demanded knowledge of the conversation, with associated gestures and looks in her direction. He'd not answered them, just read his book until they got bored.

She'd gone to his room, with a chaperone, three days later — determined not to appear too eager.

Today, she still didn't know if she'd loved the photographer or the man more. He'd specialised in documentary portraits in black and white. Leathered weather-beaten, toughened faces looked at her from wall and ceiling. His lens had been sympathetic and honest with them. Mostly from New Orleans; mostly black; mostly men. Jazz players, pimps on street corners, sailors in uniform.

'Why no women?'

'You're the first I've wanted to . . .' He let the words hang. The silence had strangled her giggle.

'I've watched you.'

She'd expected him to continue, but he hadn't. Her best friend had made her excuses and left them then, and they'd made love, and they'd married and moved to New York and they'd made each other famous, and she'd never found another lover like him, or another friend like him, or a photographer so talented . . . And where was he when she needed him, needed him so much her throat ached and eyes stung?

'It's okay, Miss Carroll.'

Ben Price placed his hands over hers, clasped on her knees. She looked beyond his shoulder and saw two ambulancemen carrying an empty body bag into the undergrowth.

'They've said you can go now. I'll take you back to the Station and we'll get your statement and . . .'

She wasn't listening. As he led her to a car, she saw only the remains she'd reported: a young man, probably not yet twenty; muscular; soggy red white vest; red Reeboks (had they always been red?); beautiful hair; throat slashed; biceps chewed by an animal; thighs and buttocks gnawed to the bone, pale ivory in dappled moonlight; strands of flesh, raw meat. Imagine the hunger of the beast; biceps, buttocks, thighs — all the best cuts: eaten.

She sat in the car. Dawn was adding light to the scene, unburnishing the silver to grey; the moon, full and resting on the tree tops — it was beautiful. For a moment Ben stopped talking and the crackled radio messages paused, and Sylvia was certain — she couldn't say how — that she could hear music.

And then the pandemonium.

'Tell me, Miss Carroll, what do you know about Satanism?'

'Whadda you mean, honey?'

'Have you ever been involved in rituals that might be thought . . . pagan?'

Sylvia laughed, incredulous. 'You mean: "Are you now, or have you ever been a Satanist?" Oh please, Inspector, you're surely not serious?'

Inspector Neal repeated the question. An uncompromising man from Yorkshire, he seemed unlikely to joke. He ran his hand from his forehead through his lank hair. His face was flushed from the heat, his collar undone. Patches of sweat at his armpits were seeping into the lining of his jacket. He'd take it off, but those patches were embarrassing.

He watched the suspect's eyes as she denied all knowledge of witchcraft. There was a coldness about her. Rich bitch. He'd interviewed her for nearly an hour and her

"She looked closely at his face, trying to erase that other."

story — in fact, everything about her — was solid. It was her beauty gave her that assurance.

By God, she was attractive. Women like that, he thought, made you feel inadequate. Real pecker shrinkers. Handcuff her — that'd teach her. Make her understand she should respect him. And why was she always smiling at Ben Price? Young bastard, still wet behind the ears.

For a moment he saw himself in her eyes. Something dirty about him, as if what she made him feel was wrong, unclean. He was a Man of God's sake. A Man! He still had a good physique for a forty-two year old. When he slipped his shirt off, for a tart, they still smiled, still knew enough to be impressed, still knew they had a man in their arms.

Oh, sod it. Send her packing and get some rest. She'll break another day.

Neal unconsciously tugged the ends of his jacket sleeves. Straightened his tie.

'Okay, Miss Carroll, you can go now. We'll need you to give evidence at the inquest. I'm afraid you'll have to stay in touch with us till then. Price will show you out.'

The heat made Sylvia drowsy. She had to get out of the hotel. For a week she'd gone to museums and shows and shopped and seen films and seen friends and suffered their sympathy and answered police question and more questions, till her story had become a chant to repeat before sleep, and now: she had to get out of this damned hotel.

She wanted to go back. Not to New York, but to Hampstead Heath. She knew the murderer traditionally returned to the scene of the crime, but what about the finder? Would she appear insane to her friends if she returned, or would they expect her to want to lay the ghost to rest? And why the hell was she thinking about "them" anyway? Why?

Because, she supposed, "appearance" was the touchstone of her life. In trouble, she looked to her china doll image reflected in a mirror, accepted that her beauty would carry her through, because there would always be someone to pet her and comfort her. This reflected reality was usually enough to silence the sand grain voice, the whisper of the time glass, the voice that spoke of beauty lost and ensuing loneliness.

She kissed her own cold lips in the mirror and left the room.

The taxi dropped her near Hampstead Heath Station. She had to stop herself from running, despite the heat, so eager was she to see the murder site again. Three hundred yards away, she saw there was no hope. Bright plastic ribbons flapped between the trees and two policeman stood on guard. She made a face at their backs and began to wander towards the nearby trees, invited by the cool shadows on grass turned red-brown by the hot summer. It was good to be out of the hotel, among living things. The trees around her were lush and she felt drowsy again. She lay at the base of a tree and tried to remember the last time she'd spent time on her own, just enjoying herself, not having to be somewhere in a hurry. The healing music seeped into her before she even heard it, and she slept.

Eos was dreaming. The same dream: he was huddled in a dark chamber without corners, surrounded by fluid and the sound of his own heartbeat. At first he thought he was drowning, then floating. Gradually, he could see soft, red light through the walls of the chamber. It flickered, tracing the veins in the wall. He could hear voices. Chanting; calling the name of his Father. Then the fluid was gone and his skin and fur were wet and he couldn't breathe. He battered his horns against the walls. It was hot and he couldn't breathe. He saw a spot in the wall was turning brown, then black, and finally an incandescence of red. He kicked out with his hoof, the wall cracked and suddenly there was air to breathe and screams to hear. He stood in the ruined shell of his birth and looked around him.

Couples, mostly naked, with wine dribbling from slack jaws, sat around him, the remaining fluid from his egg hissed in the embers of the fire. Their eyes were wild with fear. They started scrabbling to escape his gaze, the men pushing the women to one side. One woman took his gaze and he wanted her, but he needed fresh meat to eat, so he fell, and falling in his dream, awoke.

He smelt the air. It was poisoned and made him feel unwell. The pools of water that he found were bitter. He looked up at sunlight through the branches of the tree. He could *see* the thickness of the air, clouding his view of Helios who, seven times since his rebirth had ridden his chariot across the Heavens.

A tear swelled in his eye and trickled gently down his cheek. He wanted the fields of Arcadia, feeling so small and frightened here, in a world of unfamiliar smells, tastes and sounds. He hated, *hated* this place, and the fine black dust that fell on his skin made him sneeze.

Eos stood and stretched beneath the boughs of the tree. He ran a hand along each horn to cleanse the dust from it. He was worried and lonely. He knew he shouldn't have eaten the beautiful boy meat. It was wrong, yet his mouth watered as he remem-

NICHOLAS VINCE PROFILE

BORN: In 1958 in Wegberg, West Germany

ACTING CREDITS: Both HELLRAISER movies, NIGHTBREED, *Indelible Evidence* (TV, Autumn 1990)

CREDITS: *Suddenly Last Week* (CRISIS #51)

***Look, See* (FEAR #7)**

***The Life and Comic Times of John Bolton* (CHEVAL NOIR #4)**

***The Beast in Beauty* (SKELETON CREW 2/2)**

***Cenobite* (HELLRAISER Book Four)**

Various articles in L'APOCALYPSE

Secretary of the Society Strip Illustrations

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOU TIME: "Not watching television and reading Terry Pratchett books . . ."

HIS GREATEST REGRET: "I haven't got any. Not yet . . ."

HIS FAVOURITE PERSON: My mother.

MOST FANCIABLE PERSON: "Sigourney Weaver as she appeared in the back of SKELETON CREW 2/1."

bered the iron taste of the blood and flesh on his tongue. His tongue searched his teeth for the strand of flesh trapped by a canine. He wiped the remembered blood from his chin. It had felt good to rub it onto his chest, to touch his nipples. Lick the drops from his finger tips. It had felt good, because he had been able to *feel* for the first time in centuries. He'd been summoned to reality, and although he felt lonely, at least he *could* feel.

The peasants had not supplied the fresh kill, nor the wine, in the proper manner. So the fault was theirs. If he hadn't eaten he would have died that hour. And he *had* looked for other animals — had even used the pipes — but this was a dead land and none had answered.

Then he saw her. The women he'd seen the night he was born. Walking through the trees towards him. She looked tired. Perhaps if he played for her, she would not run away. Perhaps she might talk to him and tell him of this strange land. Perhaps they might love, and she would hold him afterwards and he would stop being lonely for a space of time.

His music worked like the charm it was. She lay near a tree. Eos, as quietly as he could, approached the sleeping woman. He lay beside her, moved his face close to hers, kissed her lips and whispered into her dreams.

Sylvia was back in the hospital, at David's side, holding his hand. It would not be long now. His eyelids would flutter and he'd smile at her — this shrivelled thing, with its brown blotched skin and the tubes to help it breathe, would say her name and say he was sorry.

And she'd spit in his face.

He'd murdered her, poisoned her blood, decreed that she might poison her children. Planted a time bomb in her immunity system, in the name of love. Betrayed her trust, broken their vows. And still she loved him.

Crying, she would wipe her spittle from his face. Crying, she would leave the room for the last time.

David was a victim. A victim of those others, the catamites, the sodomites, the perverts who had seduced him because he was beautiful, because he might further their career. It was *them* not David, who had done this to her.

Like "Naughty Jack", she had taken her revenge.

The dream changed. As she turned to leave, a man, a beautiful man was standing there. His hair was centre parted and his trousers were dark brown. That he didn't wear a shirt seemed right. He was another victim, like David. She could tell that. He looked frightened and alone — almost a child. Then he was holding her and kissing her neck. And they were in a forest and he was whispering to her, again and again:

'I saw you do it. I saw you kill the beautiful boy.'

There was no accusation in his voice. He was, she realised, thanking her. She looked into his eyes. They were like a young deer's, moist and without harm.

She felt the muscles of his back as she clasped him and he ran his hands beneath her dress. At his touch, a charge raced across the surface of her skin. Her back rose as his lips touched the curve of her breast. Life flowed through her veins. Sensations welled and spilt.

She had to close her eyes to stop them leaping their sockets. It was impossible to contain the sensation as her ears rang and she wanted to gnaw on him, to possess and be possessed, and his teeth were on her nipple and the feeling moved her beyond the whining definition of pain and pleasure, because she knew he would not damage her, that he was too gentle.

And *although* she thrashed, in the reins of the animal, he had wakened inside her, *although* she clawed the ground to anchor herself, she could feel the grass stalks tickle her palm, the grains invade her nails, so that instead she clawed the air. Her anchor gone, she was bereft of time, bereft of anything but her body, which was all spirit, and the spirit was a fire that coruscated her spine, which arched as she pushed up to him, growing afraid that she might never return from this experience. And if she did, how to live afterwards?

Although he caused this in her — she felt safe.

For the words stopped, the words of "pain" and "guilt" and "revenge" lost meaning. Here, where meaning was an image of a shadow of a butterfly, where you could marvel at your own hand because you saw it anew, where the shadows finally shattered and all was light: the electric sea crashed the caverns and all was light and noise and nothing and nothing . . .

She could not move. There were no nerves that made a connection she understood. Her body was a thing gradually focussed, at the wrong end of a telephone. She could not move as she looked at her lover.

Sated, her dream rolled from her, and stood. He lifted the pipes to his lips and played. And his seed grew in her. **SC**

"Leathered, weather-beaten, toughened faces looked at her from wall and ceiling."

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Seamus A Ryan, whose photographs are scattered throughout this magazine and others on both sides of the Atlantic, takes a look at one of the most popular areas of book collecting: limited editions.

Limited Editions: A Warning

Book collecting is a subject rarely covered in the horror press, and yet everywhere we see dealers and publishers advertising such things as 'trade hardcovers', 'proofs' and 'limited editions'. The latter, being probably the most attractive books to collect, can also be the worst items of value-for-money. I intend to highlight some of the danger areas in collecting limited edition hardcovers.

Firstly, it is difficult to find a good book dealer other than by recommendation from a satisfied customer (few shops regularly stock limiteds — Fantasy Inn and Forbidden Planet are exceptions). The best idea is to shop around a few dealers, and even if you find one you are happy with, continue to send for catalogues from others, so you know you're not missing anything special, or being charged over the odds.

Secondly, there are vast differences between the quality (and quantity, as will be seen later) of the limited editions of various publishers. One of the best limiteds to date is without a doubt the Donald M Grant edition of Douglas E Winter's PRIME EVIL anthology. Designed by award winning fantasy artist Thomas Canty (who illustrates the limited in colour throughout), the book comes in a fold-over case lined with red velvet, bound and covered in leather and printed on superior acid-free paper stock (hands up all of you with yellowing copies of THE DAMNATION GAME) and is replete with over twenty colour illustrations by Canty. The price of this publishers' wet dream? £125.00.

At the other end of the scale from PRIME EVIL (which, despite featuring original stories by King, Barker and Straub among others, has now been remaindered — the Fantasy Inn bookshop in London have U.S. hardcover first editions for less than £8.00) is the limited edition of the rare Stephen King novella *Dolan's Cadillac* published by reputable small press publisher Lord John Press. The story originally appeared over several issues of the *Castle Rock* newsletter, but the text varies slightly between the two editions. The limited in question (there was no trade edition) is signed and numbered (but of course!), printed on superb quality paper and nicely bound in printed end boards, with numerous appearances of a small black Cadillac motif throughout. At £75.00 for 65 pages, though, one would have to think hard about adding it to a collection, not least because the book was not only late, but also had the print run substantially increased (due to demand?) before publication. Some dealers were asking up to twice cover price, too!

The quantity of so-called 'limited' editions is also a point of contention between publishers, dealers and their customers, the most publicised offender being American publisher Dark Harvest. For the record, I believe that Dark Harvest have done more for the mass market horror field during their relatively short time on the scene than virtually all the other small presses put together; they have given us uncensored fiction from Ray Garton,classic first hardcover editions of SWAN SONG, CARRION COMFORT etc., and the most consistent series of new short fiction in the world (NIGHT VISIONS, of course). However, when it comes to limited edition books they have pushed credibility to its limits. To explain, publishers normally issue a few extra copies of a limited (normally numbered rather than lettered) reserved for authors' and publishers' friends, sales staff and so on. Such copies are usually referred to as 'P/C' (Presentation Copies). Dark Harvest, however, have been known to send out P/Cs to dealers who should know better, meaning that some purchasers will be holding onto a copy which is worth rather less than expected. One of the top British dealers, Andy Richards, has tried to bring pressure to bear in the past, by returning any P/Cs he is sent to the offending publisher. Purchasers from other dealers can fight the trend by doing the same, but what about the authors and artists who *sign* the limited editions? Doesn't signing 500 copies of a 350-copy limited strike them as odd? If not, why not?

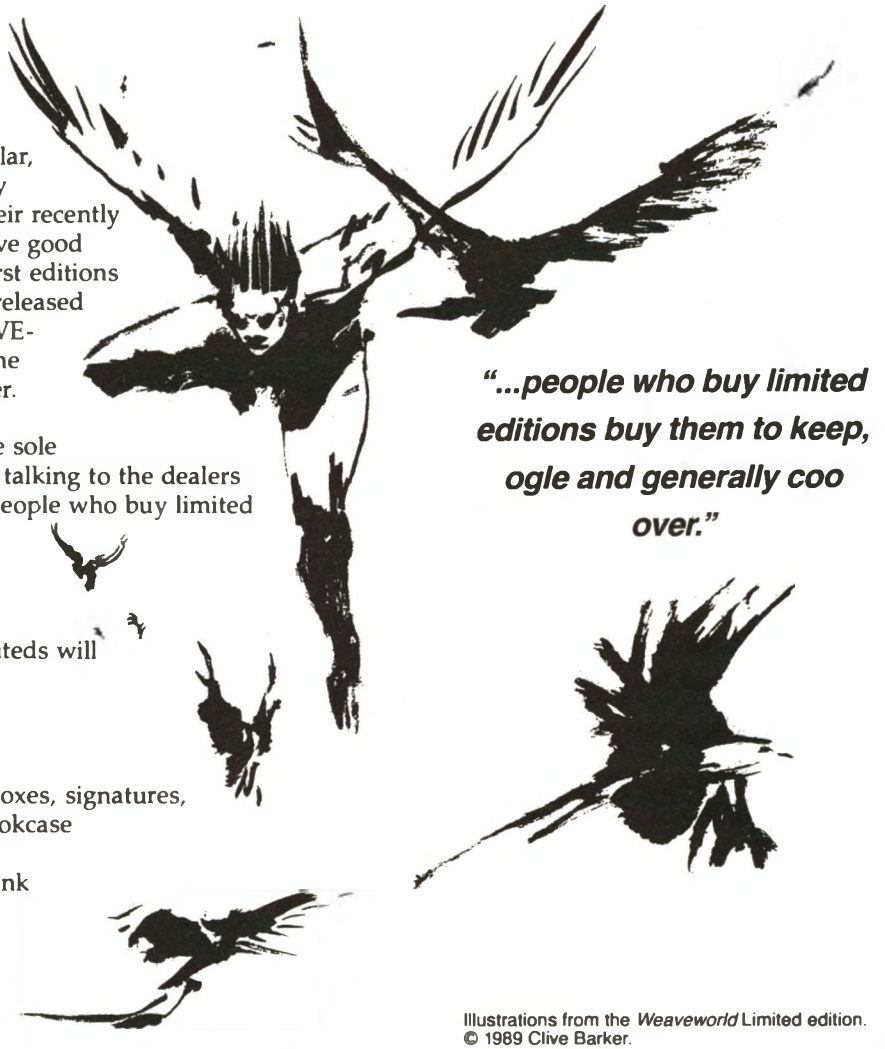
". . . Dark Harvest have done more for the mass market horror field . . . than virtually all the other small presses put together . . ."

In Britain, where demand for hardcovers is not so great but trade paperbacks are becoming ever more popular, one company is leading the way in quality limited editions: Century Hutchinson. Their recently launched *Legend Limited Editions* series have good (but not great) production values, are true first editions (whereas, more often than not, limiteds are released with or after the trade edition, as with WEAVE-WORLD) and only cost three or four times the cover price of the subsequent trade hardcover.

Finally, if you are buying limiteds with the sole intention of making a fast buck (and I'm not talking to the dealers here — I know *you* are!), bear in mind that people who buy limited editions buy them to keep, ogle and generally coo over. So, whereas the numbers of existant copies of paperbacks and hardcovers will have dropped considerably, the numbers of pristine copies of limiteds will remain fairly static, since they are unlikely to be mistreated (or, in some cases, even *read*).

All that said, limited editions, with their boxes, signatures, numbers and extras, can turn a mundane bookcase into a real conversation point. So clear some shelf space, kiss goodbye to your friendly bank manager and get ready to embrace Mr "Hey Gringo, how mucha for your daughters?" Book Dealer.

"...people who buy limited editions buy them to keep, ogle and generally coo over."



Illustrations from the *Weaveworld* Limited edition.
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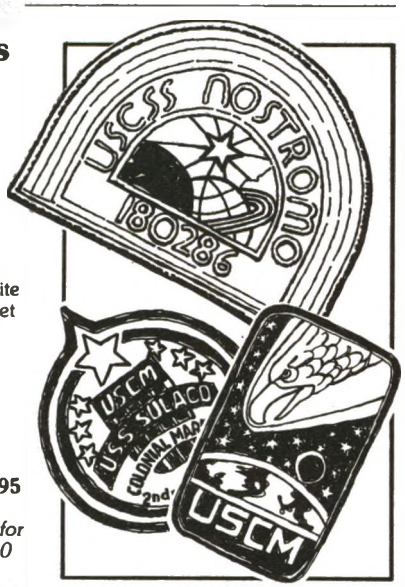

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Saturday they worked on their tans. By Sunday they were working on staying alive!

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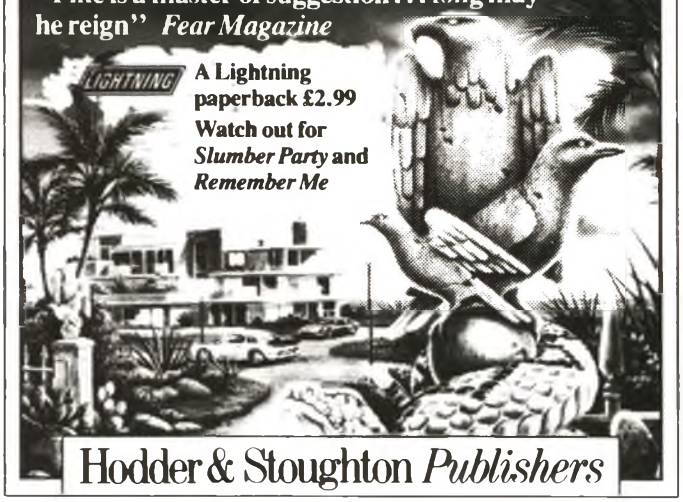

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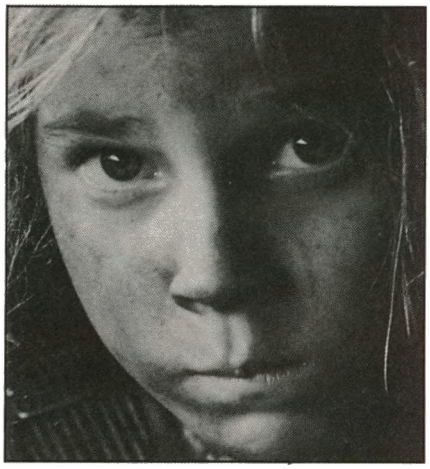


Jessica Palmer, an irregular *Skeleton Crew* columnist, is the American authoress of many published short stories and academic works.

Crew Cuts

Star-Spangled Aliens

This month's topic is 'aliens'. Since I am one, it's a topic I feel that I can discuss with authority. If you doubt the truth of this, I will show you my registration papers, which must be updated at the local 'nick' every time I move or change jobs. I am required by law to carry these papers on my person at all times.

A law-abiding non-citizen, I comply, keeping them in my pocket along with my communicator and laser gun. The papers are somewhat intimidating. They state in bold red letters that I must be ready to present them to the police upon request. I've often wondered if someone were raped in the neighborhood and the only distinguishing characteristic were an American accent would I be picked up.

When I registered with the police, the officer in charge laughed. "Alien," he said. "makes it sound like you have two heads or something". I didn't tell him that amputation of the extraneous cranimum was a prerequisite for residency. The second head floats in a jar of formaldehyde and stares balefully down at me as I write.

I live in dread not of impending arrest, but rather of actually having to show the papers to some-one. The picture is awful as would be expected of one of those machines that vomits out four photos for a couple of quid. It's not improved by the fact that I was hungover the day it was taken. If anyone has any doubts about my alien status, the picture would allay them I look decidedly green.

The surprising thing is that they let me into the country at all. If my only introduction to the States were *I Love Lucy, Dallas, Rawhide,* and *The Phil Silvers Show,* I would think twice about letting any Yank live here. Surely Lucille Ball shrieking through a thick coating of chocolate, is more a terrifying spectacle than any obscenity that could possibly pop from Signourey Weaver's naval.

The British are very forgiving as I blunder about the countryside committing all sorts of social blunders. The primary problem is language: I have not quite mastered English yet. There are vast linguistic differences which are not immediately apparent.

Most often, the offense — whatever it may be — is not intended. Once I was grabbed in a pub by an irate female who asked if the gentleman with whom I had been conversing was 'chatting me up'. Naively, I said yes. She was incensed. Later I got someone to translate and wondered if I had innocently precipitated a quarrel.

Asking where the 'restroom' is elicites some rather interesting responses. I have been directed on varying occasions to a restaurant or someone's bedroom 'Toilet' is not a word commonly used in the U.S. Don't ask me why, since it's perfectly respectable word. Perhaps it has something to do with our Puritan origins, or maybe we just don't like to admit we do that sort of thing.

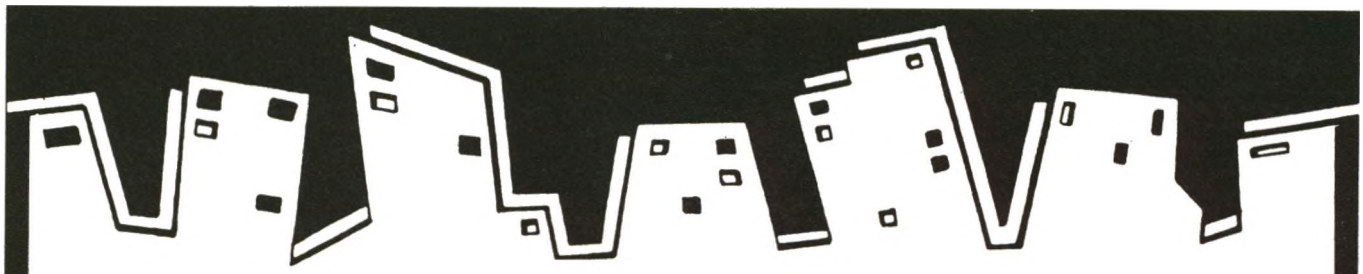
Instead of 'toilet' we use a euphemism. However, our replacements are not necessarily logical. For instance 'restroom' now who actually 'rests' there besides those with a flaccid bowel? And 'bathroom' is only appropriate if one intends to bathe — an unlikely occurrence in a restaurant or pub. Sometime we call it 'the facilities', but never-NEVER- do we use the T-word. Horrors!

I could have used an interpreter during my initial forays into the supermarket. I soon discovered your biscuits are our cookies, or crackers; your scones are our biscuits. Treacle is molasses; bangers are hot dogs; baps are buns; crisps are chips; and chips are french fries. After a year, I just recently learned zuccini is marrow and eggplant is something else again, and the discoveries continue. The owner of the hardware store has gotten used to me as I stumble about searching for thumb tacks only to find they are call drawing pins. He keeps smelling salts around, knowing I will convulse when he tries to sell me a small appliance without a plug.

Oops . . . excuse me, the transmitter is squawking, and my compatriots are eager to continue the invasion plans.

"Go ahead, Scotty, I'm listening. . ."

"I've often wondered if someone were raped in the neighbourhood and the only distinguishing characteristic were an American accent would I be picked up?"



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THE 1990 EAGLE AWARDS

The Eagle Awards have been so named in honour of the famous British weekly comic of the fifties and sixties. This publication achieved a standard of quality that is still remembered today. The 1990 Eagle Awards have been organised by Richard Burton and Nick Landau with the invaluable co-operation of Titan Distributors Ltd..

INSTRUCTIONS – please read carefully before voting

- This awards poll covers only material cover-dated between January and December 1989 (inclusive). If not cover-dated, then it must have appeared for the first time between January and December 1989. Please note: British Writers and Artists working exclusively for American publishers during 1989 are not eligible for the British section but can be voted for in the American section.
- Please complete this form as quickly as possible and return it to the Counting Centre (see address below). All forms must be at the Counting Centre by 1st August 1990 at the very latest.
- You are allowed only one vote in each category. Please complete only one form per person. Multiple, incorrect or spoilt forms will be declared ineligible.
- The winners of the 1990 Eagle awards will be announced at the UK Comic Art Convention in London on September 22nd-23rd 1990. Check the fan press for full details.

AMERICAN SECTION

Favourite Artist (penciller) : Based on work appearing in professional comics. _____

Favourite Artist (inker) : Based on work appearing in professional comics. _____

Favourite Writer : Based on work appearing in professional comics. _____

Favourite Comic Book : Colour or black & white. Any genre - superhero, mystery, adventure, sf etc. (includes mini/maxi/limited series.) _____

Favourite Graphic Novel : Large format, hard/softcover book with spine. Containing comic strip material. _____

Favourite Character : Solo or group member, male or female. _____

Favourite Group or Team : Any group comprising three or more members. Must have appeared on a regular basis. _____

Favourite Villain : Solo or group member, male, female or thing. _____

Character Most Worthy of Own Title : Can be new character or old one that has had its book or series cancelled. From any year. _____

Favourite Single or Continued Story : Any genre or format - colour or black & white. First episode of any continued story must have appeared during 1989. Please quote issue number(s). _____

Favourite New Comic Title : Any format. Colour or black & white. _____

Favourite Comic Cover : Please quote title and issue number. _____

Favourite Specialist Comics Publication : Fanzine or professional magazine solely concerned with the subject of comics. Any format or printing method. Must have appeared at least twice during 1989. _____

SIGNED _____

DATE _____

BRITISH SECTION

Eligibility same as for American categories unless otherwise stated.

Favourite Artist : _____

Favourite Writer : _____

Favourite Comic : Black & white or colour. _____

Favourite Graphic Novel : Large format, hard/softcover book with spine. Containing comic strip material. _____

Favourite Character : _____

Favourite Villain : _____

Favourite Supporting Character : Solo or team member. Must not have appeared in his/her/its own series. _____

Favourite Single or Continued Story : Any genre or format - colour or black & white. First episode of any continued story must have appeared during 1989. Please quote issue number(s). _____

Favourite New Comic : Any format. Colour or black & white. _____

Favourite Comic Cover : _____

Favourite Specialist Comics Publication _____

GENERAL SECTION

Best International Comic Book : Any comic/graphic novel not originally produced in English. _____

Roll of Honour : A place on the Roll of Honour can be awarded to any comics creator, character or publication you feel has made a significant contribution to the world of comics. Any nationality. Any time up to and including December 1989. Previous winners are ineligible (Stan Lee, Fantastic Four, Steve Engelhart, Jack Kirby, Roy Thomas, Siegel & Schuster, Will Eisner, Julius Schwartz, Joe Kubert, Steve Ditko, Alan Moore, Frank Miller & Pat Mills). _____

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FORBIDDEN PLANET

ALIENS™

EXPANSION

"This time it's fraud"

A particularly neat merchandising rip-off by Lee Brimmicombe-Wood

This expansion set allows players to recreate the action from the movie ALIEN. A game map has been printed below, but players will also require a six-sided dice and counters from Leading Edge's ALIENS boardgame.

Scenarios

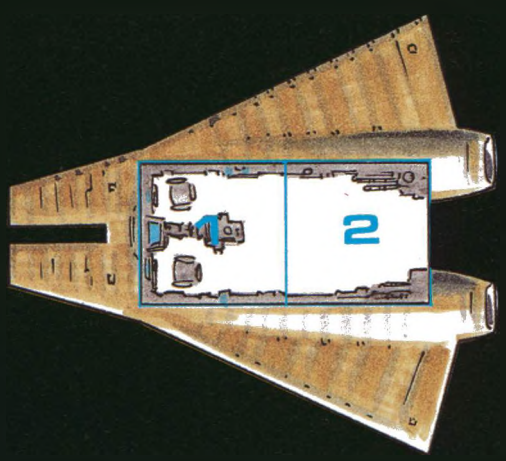
The ALIEN expansion has only one scenario, entitled SUCKING VACUUM. This gripping game recreates the climactic battle between Ripley and the alien on board the Nostromo's shuttle craft.

Game Set-Up

To set up the game, place the Ripley counter on the map square marked '1' and an alien counter on the square marked '2'.

How To Play

At the beginning of the game, roll one die. On a roll of 1-3, the alien kills Ripley immediately, thus obviating the need for a sequel. On a roll of 4-6 the alien is blown out of the airlock and incinerated by the shuttle craft's engines (to simulate this, pour lighter fuel over the counter and apply a match — younger players should do this under the supervision of a responsible adult). On a roll of 7 or higher, a dropship full of Marines appears at the rear airlock to blow the alien away. Continue the scenario as per the ALIENS boardgame rules, remembering that if the alien is killed, the acid blood eats through the hull, thus leaving everyone to die sucking vacuum (except Ripley who has a contract, or spacesuit).



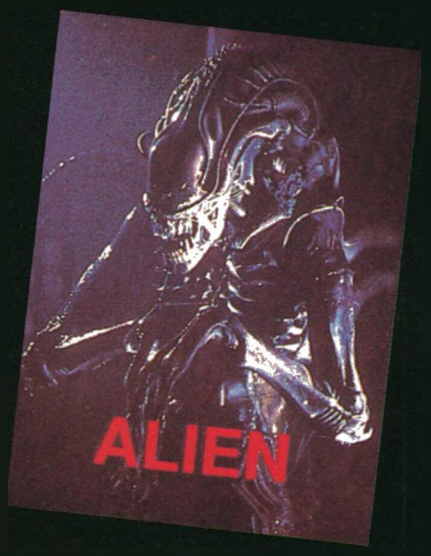
Strategy Tips

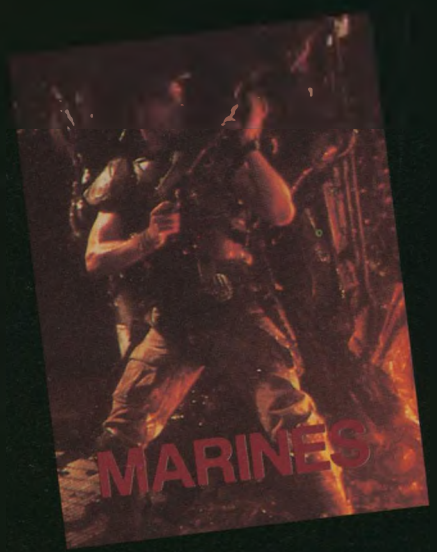
A good flick of the wrist when rolling the die may yield good results.

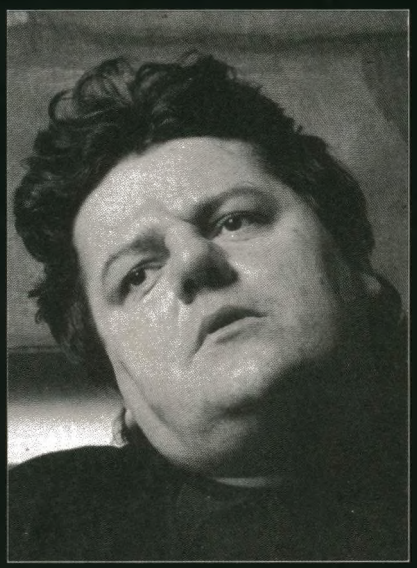
Further Expansion

If players wish to expand this complex scenario still further, watch out for the JONES THE CAT EXPANSION SET, published soon by SKELETON CREW in association with Leading Edge and the RSPCA, price £1,999.98. Good luck! SC

"Maybe we should build a campfire, sing some songs."
— Carter Burke







ALIEN III

The Queen Is Dead, Long Live The King . . .

Film buff Adrian Rigelsford takes a speculative look at *Alien World*, the second sequel to Ridley Scott's *Alien*, scheduled for a summer 1991 release.

ALIEN III is already in pre-production, with Vincent Ward at the helm owing to the departure of Renny Harlin from the project. Sigourney Weaver dons Ripley's character once more, having had a hand in the storyline for this outing. For those seeking hints of the style of the new film, look closely at Ward's THE NAVIGATOR to get a taste of his approach to film. Michael Biehn is likely to return as Hicks, but Newt — the third survivor from James Cameron's ALIENS — has yet to be cast. So much for the 'human factor' — what of the aliens themselves? What will be the focus of the third movie? A look back at ALIEN and ALIENS may provide the key . . .

Foetal, skeletal, multi-digited creatures with a genetic sensory action triggered by external movement beyond the shell of it's pod. Deep, mono-functionary instincts take over with one solitary objective, the implementation of the egg it carries within: the First Stage.

Gestation, commonly within creatures with a functioning digestive tract, thus allowing for larva digestion and growth. Predatorial instincts to hunt and forage form, the larva breaks free to allow growth and limb formation: the Second Stage.

Insectoid/reptilian characteristics, a cardio-vascular system of an acidic quality, muscular tissue with a hydrolic capability to exude force, bone-like exo skeleton stretching up to two metres in height: the Third Stage, driven by instinct to protect.

Basic physionomy the same as Stage Three, large cranial region, expanded pelvic area, produces skin-like substance to form foetal sac, actual reproductive system remains unknown: Stage Four.

What of Stage Five? The Procurator? A larger, physically stronger creature with the sole purpose of breeding a new race, a single function of spreading the seed of the species when the 'hive' of its own kind has been eradicated.

The Queen, Stage Four, was introduced at the conclusion of ALIENS. It became all too apparent that the creatures seen up to that point merely served her, protected her. But what of her mate? The creatures have already been pitted in ferocious combat against the backbone of mankind; high-tech weaponry, 'Shoot first, ask questions later'. Yet this was no real match for them: their defeat came from being outmatched strategically, and with the basic instinct they share with man: survival.

What effect would, for example, a Stage Five creature have on a community whose progress had not reached the stage of hardware present in ALIENS, and to a lesser extent in ALIEN? Humans who were still fighting to achieve a stable community, humans living in a more basic style than we do today. What if the 'Procurator' had abilities that were not present in the other creatures? Imagine a creature with the power to remain unseen, but not invisible, amongst a community of pacifists. Ecologically friendly humans, trying to be at one with nature, unaware that nature is helping to kill them off. Only someone who knew the kind of threat they were facing could help, somebody with past experience of the creatures . . . But even they might not be prepared for what the Procurator is capable of . . .

SC

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WORKS

Issue six continues its upward trend by going typeset; featuring Alan Hunter alongside Kevin Cullen, plus Chris Evans, Andy Sawyer plus many, many more new and established writers. Find out why the editor of Crew likes Works. Sample copies are £1.25, £4.50 for a year's sub. Overseas orders please add either 50p single or £2.00 per sub.

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PHOTO: Seamus A Ryan

Lee Brimmicombe-Wood has never lived up to his name. Artist, writer and leading brand of cough syrup, he was once described by Alan Moore as "that bloke over there with the funny hat."

2: Hatching Plots

Let me tell you a story.

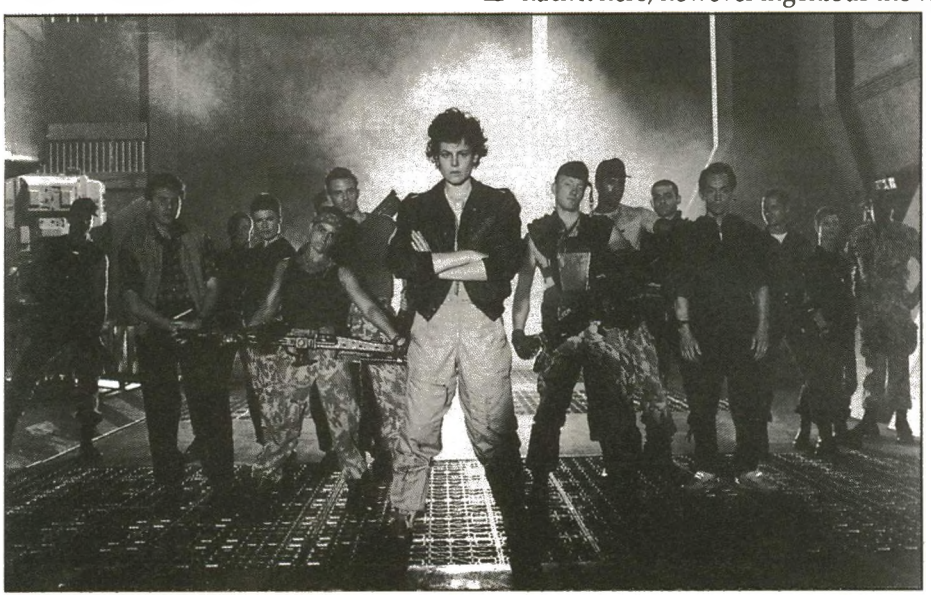
Once upon a time a bunch of butch dudes, all armed up and ready for bear, stormed a complex of corridors and tunnels where they encountered a swarm of the nastiest, most deadly predators known to mankind. Sound familiar? Yup, it's the plot of countless D&D dungeon scenarios played every week across the length and breadth of the land. Sadly, it's also the pitfall of every Gamesmaster who has tried his hand at turning ALIENS into a rolegame scenario. Let me explain.

Rolegaming at it's best is essentially improvisational theatre and as such tends to ape certain theatrical styles. Melodrama, particularly film melodrama with it's episodic construction, suspense and the obligatory happy ending, is especially suited to rolegaming. The ALIEN movies fit neatly into this slot, also being rich in atmosphere and heavy on visual style. Furthermore, their popularity means that almost everyone is familiar with them, making it easier for a prospective ALIEN Games Master to set the scene for his players. However, this familiarity is also the GM's biggest disadvantage.

The obvious problem with familiarity is that the players know exactly what their up against, and unless they are the kind of group that can act their socks off, any ALIENS scenario is going to lack the paranoia of the original movies. Another problem is that players will tend to copy characters from the movies. A GM can easily find his group mutated into a platoon of Vasquez and Drake clones that are so heavily armed, nothing slimy can squirm within a parsec and live. Scenarios with such groups can easily become competitions to see who has the highest bodycount, whilst game atmosphere and quality of roleplaying go to the wall.

The solution to both these problems lies in good preparation and plotting by the GM. Plotting is vital to establish the background of an ALIENS scenario and dictate the general course of play. Plotting should be intelligent and original, shying away as much as possible from the film plots. The plotline that runs Marines-meet-aliens, Marines-kill-aliens, Marines-go-home is not going to hack it here, however ingenious the variation on the theme — a GM needs to be original. One way is to snatch ideas from other sources. The ALIENS comics, for instance, are rich in plot ideas stemming from the premise that the corporations are secretly breeding aliens, and that the aliens have overrun the earth. The other way to glean plot ideas is to take some facet of detail from the ALIEN/ALIENS movies and then extend the idea by applying a series of "what ifs." For example: "what if" the characters discover that a nest of aliens is about to land on a colony, and "what if" the colony leaders are unwilling to heed their warning? The next thing you know, you have the premise for a scenario.

ALIENS: "Why don't you put her in charge?"



The 'human factor' should figure high in both the GM's plotting and the

roleplayer's acting. The films are essentially about people's capacity to cope (or not, as the case may be) with a force that is hideous, awesome and uncontrollable. In many ways the humans in both the films and the roleplaying are their own worst enemies, such as the colonist who doesn't accept the presence of the aliens, the soldier who underestimates their power, or the corporate exec who sees only the profits they could generate. The familiar motives of humanity contrast quite sharply with the incomprehensible nature of the aliens and a smart GM can play these off for good effect. In fact, non-player characters (NPCs) are more likely to be the real enemies, introducing into an ALIENS scenario one of the most important elements — paranoia.

Paranoia — keeping players on their toes — is one of the hardest things to incorporate successfully into a rolegame and is often subject to such vagaries as a group's experience or even it's mood during a particular play session. These problems aside, there are ways to help create paranoia amongst players; however, simply stacking the odds against them is not the way to create this effect (indeed, it would more than likely create frustration). Again, good plotting is required. As suggested above, human antagonists (even amongst the player character (PC) group) are a good way to keep players off balance, even to the point of not trusting each other. For example, a GM could place some PC corporate agents amongst a group of PC Marines, with the agents attempting to sabotage the Marine's efforts to exterminate a nest of aliens. Another way to introduce paranoia is to make players uncertain as to the fate of their characters.

Now, all Gamesmasters have different styles of running rolegames. Some enjoy running violent, bloody rolegames in which PCs die frequently. Others prefer not to punish players in this way, preferring to let their characters live so that they can develop. In ALIEN/ALIENS a compromise must be struck — players made aware that they can and maybe will die, but that death is not necessarily arbitrary. The object is to create a tension in which an individual player wants to be the one that survives. This may even create an element of rivalry or competition amongst the players — thus raising the paranoia quotient.

Paranoia can be further increased by making the characters defenseless against the threat the aliens present. Too many gamers want their characters to tote ALIENS-style weaponry that can deal out death to battalions of aliens at the pull of a trigger. However, such weapons can short-circuit a scenario if characters are allowed to vapourise all the slimies a GM can throw at them as it means that they can only be "got at" in an arbitrary manner. It is far better if the GM can contrive to take away the players' pretty death toys and so make their survival dependant on their wits. Another technique is to cut a group's escape route or limit it to only one or two characters (in ALIEN, the escape shuttle couldn't take many people; in ALIENS, the dropship was destroyed). Not only does this heighten the survival issue in a scenario, but it also eliminates the "Let's-Nuke-The-Site-From-Orbit Syndrome" that, again, can so easily short circuit a scenario.

The last element of a good ALIENS scenario is style, which is more than simple visual cues from the GM. The ALIEN milieu is gritty and authentic, populated by real characters and set in some vague future defined only by the surroundings and technology. GMs must resist the temptation to demythologise this universe and make it too familiar. The ALIEN universe is a cold, forbidding environment and a sense of this must exist in a scenario. The characters in the movies were alone and left to their own devices against the alien threat. Similarly, a rolegame scenario should have scope to allow characters to demonstrate their self-reliance and/or dependence in a universe every bit as harsh and alien as the creatures themselves.

Ultimately, the elements I have described should come together to make an ALIENS rolegame scenario. However, a good GM should always bear in mind a scenario's movie roots and remember that a rolegame is not an abstract exercise in number crunching or die rolling, but a performance. The GM must perform to get the most out of the players by setting the scene, acting the non-playing parts, and pacing the rolegaming sessions like the movies. Most experienced GMs are aware that the best rolegaming involves no die rolling at all, when the players begin to interact and perform themselves. If a GM's efforts at plotting can fire the imaginations of his players into effective rolegaming, then, and only then, will he have truly hatched monsters.

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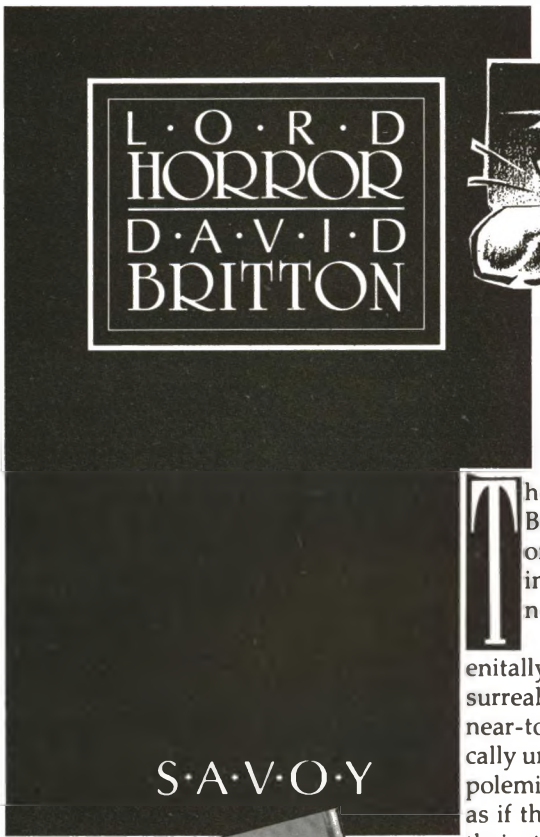


PICKING the BONES

L·O·R·D HORROR

by David Britton (Savoy Books hardcover, £10.95)

The word 'novel' seems both perjorative *and* inadequate when applied to David Britton's LORD HORROR. *Epiphany* seems better to convey its visionary grasp of formal and narrative discourse; perhaps immediate antecedents might include Pynchon's ferocious GRAVITY'S RAINBOW and Swift's scabrous, nominal MODEST PROPOSAL.

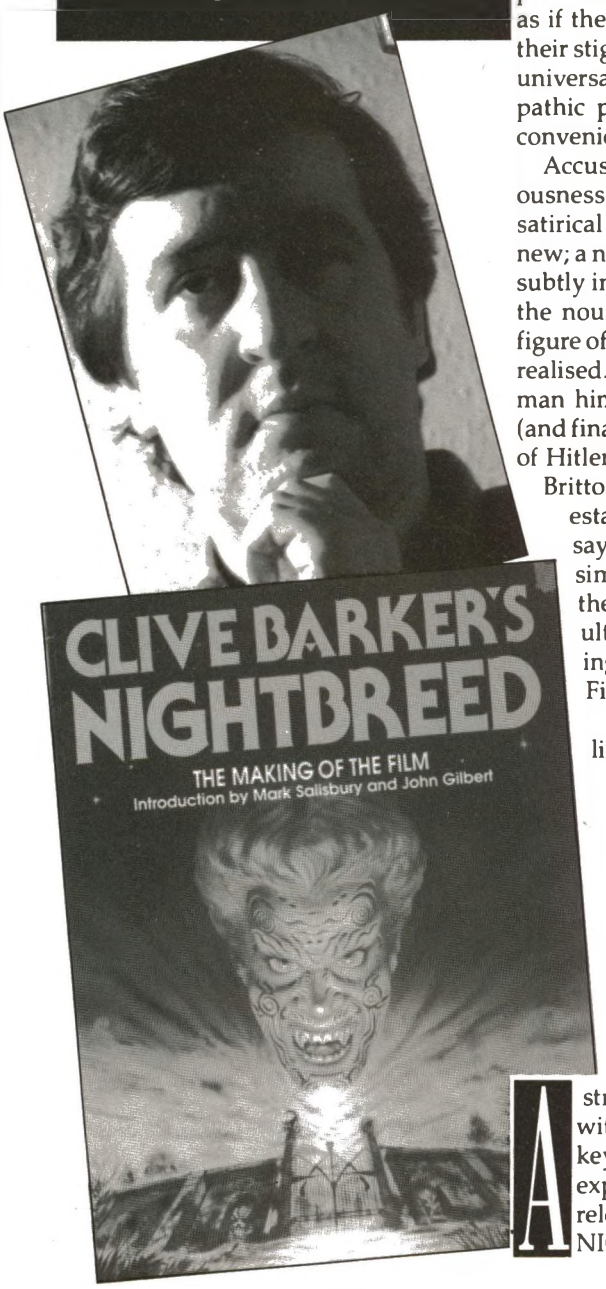
Predictably, Britton's subject matter (Anti-Semitism, Hitler and, more tangenitally, the Holocaust), additionally overlaid with a highly personalised and visceral surrealism and a lack of any sanitising, distancing moral viewpoint, provoked a near-total literary ostracision. This societal notion that certain subjects are dramatically untouchable provides, of course, an easy licence for literature to falter into mere polemic rather than engaging truly contentious issues. It's very condescending, too, as if the groups or subjects specified are both sanctified and excluded by virtue of their stigmata. Fortunately, Britton sidesteps such facile assumptions, illustrating the universality and irrationality of prejudice through the mouthpiece of a jaded, psychopathic patriot (with a small 'p') who chooses to identify his inadequacies with convenient scapegoats.

Accusations of impenetrability and complexity don't really address Britton's seriousness of purpose. There are stylistic echoes, deliberate or otherwise (*cf.* Britton's satirical homage to Orwell's BURMESE DAYS), but what finally emerges is wholly new; a novel whose sheer visionary *breadth* is astounding. A Schopenhaueian subtext subtly informs the numerous scattered monographs on monochromatic illustration; the noumenal/phenomenal dichotomy, perhaps most vividly realised in Britton's figure of Hitler. Schopenhauer's dictum "The world is my idea" here becomes literally realised. The dead weight of Hitler's continuing effect upon history (as opposed to the man himself) finds visceral but memorable expression as a constantly expanding (and finally world-proportioned) carnivorous penis, the anthropomorphosized myth of Hitler submerging and finally disconnecting itself from the human actuality.

Britton's dense but rapid-fire narrative is propelled by a relentless acceleration that establishes a welcome literary complicity with the scabrous visual imagery of, say, Jan Svankmajer. Like Britton's, Svankmajer's comedy is black, visceral, pessimistic; life really *is* suffering, the conflict of countless wills striving to exist at the expense of each other. Will may be temporarily denied by the intellect, but ultimately the only real good is extinction. Lord Horror's imperfect understanding and articulation of this subtext leads him to offer extinction only to others. Finally he accepts it as a *personal* inevitability.

Whew! Don't worry. LORD HORROR *may* be a complex vision, but it *reads* like a dream. Buy this book. If you can.

Colin de Suinn



NIGHTBREED

THE MAKING OF THE FILM

by Clive Barker, Mark Salisbury and John Gilbert (Collins trade paperback, £9.99)

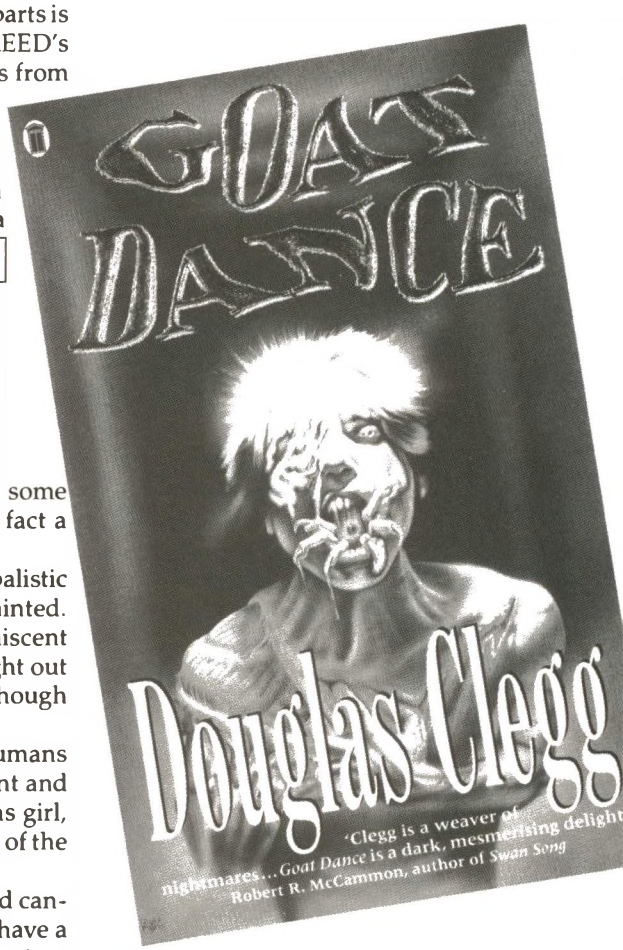
A striking cover, a few words from Clive Barker, quotes from everyone involved with NIGHTBREED, a well-written introduction by two of FEAR magazine's key figures and a totally out-of-date screenplay for the movie make up this expensive softcover from Collins. Yet, as a companion to both the movie (to be released on director Clive's birthday, October 5) and Titan's superlative THE NIGHTBREED CHRONICLES — published far too early and soon to be

relaunched in time for the film's release — it is an indispendable aid to understanding a very complex film.

The different aspects and angles that make up the volume may appear to be little more than padding for a published screenplay — Barker's foreword was written far too early to contain anything controversial, and Salisbury's and Gilbert's introduction, while being very good, reads like a magazine article — but the sum of the parts is excellent, and I challenge anyone to have an un-thumbed copy after NIGHTBREED's release. Filled throughout with fascinating production sketches, photographs from the sets and the studios, a few striking pictures of Shuna Sassi and Anne Bobby, some special effects shots and early drafts of title sequences, movie posters etc., the book comes highly recommended by this hack, even if the screenplay bears about as much resemblance to the final cut of the movie as a packet of mixed nuts does to the entire staff of Image Animation. But then, I'm a *sucker* for this stuff.

Dave Hughes

by Douglas Clegg
(New English Library paperback, £3.95)


GOAT DANCE
Douglas Clegg
'Clegg is a weaver of
nightmares... Goat Dance is a dark, mesmerising delight
Robert R. McCammon, author of Swan Song

Let's get one thing clear from the start. The Goat Dance of the title is not some pagan ritual involving our blessing four-legged mascot friends. It is in fact a field. Yes, that's right a field — grass and earth.

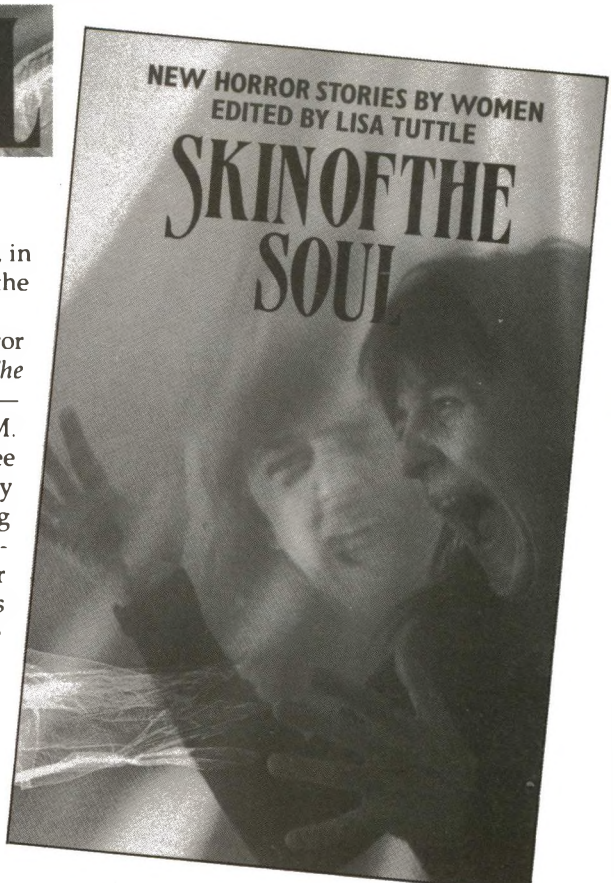
This particular field was used as a burial ground by a tribe of cannibalistic indians and is tainted with their evil. Anything that ventures near is also tainted. What we have here is a big bold book in too few pages. The scope is reminiscent of Peter Straub's exemplary GHOST STORY, there are strong characters straight out of a Stephen King novel, and a shape changing, inhuman adversary that, although derivative in some respects, has many original and imaginative tricks.

I enjoyed GOAT DANCE for what it is — an entertaining read. There are humans which have been touched by the evil in the ground and those that are innocent and blind to the changes being wrought around them. Don't expect the 'boy gains girl, boy loses girl, boy saves girl' scenarios that Clegg seems to be setting up. Most of the humans end up dead or worse by the time the final page is turned.

One has to admire Clegg for his imagination and his tackling of such a broad canvas. With more time spent on the plot, and some judicious editing we would have a classic 'must-read'. Instead we have a slightly derivative but entertaining diversion.

SKIN OF THE SOUL

Edited by Lisa Tuttle
(The Women's Press, £13.95)



SKIN OF THE SOUL says it all really. The stories in this collector deal, in one way or another, with feelings, emotions, deep-seated angst — the horror that comes from within rather than the external threat.

The stories themselves are a mixed bag. There is some 'true life' horror *Anzac Day* (Cherry Wilder), *The Night Wolf* (Karen Joy Fowler) and *The Dream* (Dyan Sheldon), two that I wouldn't ever describe as stories — they are jumbled images and are practically incoherent (*Walls* by R. M. Lamming and *Pregnant* by Joyce Carol Gates) and amongst the rest, three that are excellent and make the collection worth buying. The best is *Boobs* by Suzy McKee Charnes, the tale of an adolescent girl who discovers that being able to turn herself into a werewolf has some unexpected advantages. *Lightning Red* by Melanie Tam brings a new slant to the idea of one's mother comforting you when you are hurt and Lisa Tuttle's own *Mr Elphinstone's Hands* is a rather eerie explanation of psychic mediums, ectoplasm and the Victorian mentality.

Overall the collection is interesting and different. The ideas presented, although perhaps not varied enough (how many horrors from within can you name?), show yet again that editor Lisa Tuttle is perceptive of the subtle chill. On a personal note, the collection is not the best I have seen, and is perhaps restricted by the dictate of 'only women'.

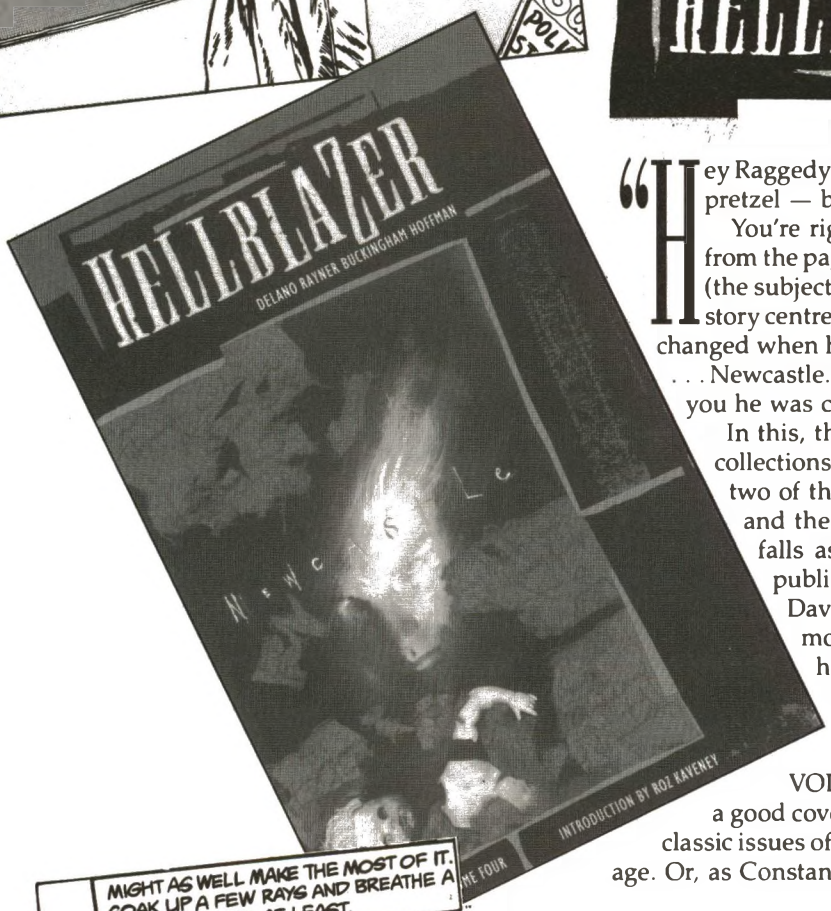
Susan Bishop

HELLBLAZER

VOLUME FOUR

(Titan Books, £6.50)

by Jamie Delano, *et al.*



"Hey Raggedy Man. I seen a spaceman in the automat. He gave me a gold pretzel — but I lost it."

You're right: HELLBLAZER is no ordinary comic book. Spawned from the pages of the Alan Moore issues of the SWAMP THING comic (the subject of next issue's SKELETON CREW), it's 'a mature-readers' story centred around John Constantine, a cool customer whose life was changed when he inadvertantly summoned up a demon in downtown, er . . . Newcastle. He smokes. He drinks. He swears. He looks like Sting. Told you he was cool.

In this, the fourth volume of Titan Books' black-and-white reprint collections of HELLBLAZER, four issues of the comic — including two of the best by Delano, being the flashback story of Newcastle and the thought-provoking *On The Beach*, in which Constantine falls asleep at the seaside and dreams of Armaggedon — are published in a useful new edition with a bastardized cover (by Dave McKean) taken from HELLBLAZER #12. Rather than the mono reproduction detracting from the story, it serves to highlight the inadequacies of DC Comics' colour techniques for, whether the colourists or the printers are at fault, HELLBLAZER and SWAMP THING both look better in these Titan editions.

VOLUME FOUR is, like the others, beautifully presented with a good cover and an interesting foreword by Roz Kaveney, reprinting classic issues of a classic horror comic in a stylish and well-designed package. Or, as Constantine himself might say, "Bloody great!" **Nick Gillott**

V FOR VENDETTA

By Alan Moore and David Lloyd

(DC Comics/Titan Books, prices vary)

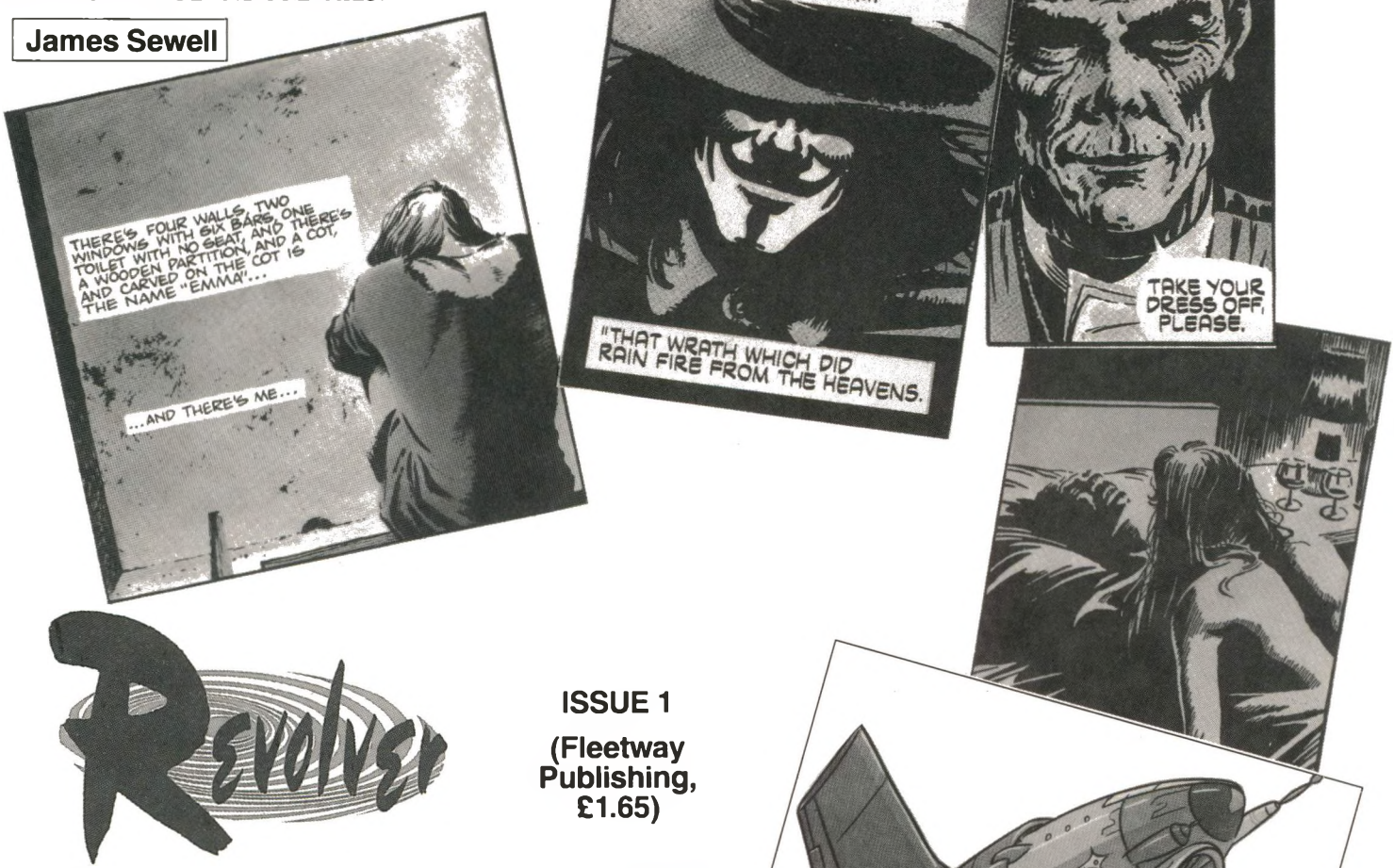
by Alan Moore and David Lloyd

Have you ever been lent a comic book by a friend, only to find that by the time you've decided to collect it all the early issues are sold out? This is what happened to me with V FOR VENDETTA. I hunted around comic marts and stores, but a couple of issues escaped me. I *had* read them, but not in the context of the other issues. Now DC Comics — publisher of the comic-format editions during 1988 and 1989 — and Titan Books have reprinted the series in its entirety, including two episodes exclusive to this edition (although they have appeared before, in black and white, in WARRIOR magazine, where the story first appeared), included for completists. Moore's introduction from the DC series is included, along with a new introduction by exemplary artist David Lloyd and some pre-production sketches similar to those that appeared in the WATCHMEN collection.

Reading V FOR VENDETTA from beginning to end sheds new light on the story: it

becomes a conglomeration of 1984, THE PRISONER, ZORRO and the Guy Fawkes legend. It adds weight, both literally and metaphorically, giving the strong sense that V would be a great novel even though it undoubtedly works better in the medium of graphic narrative. Lloyd perceives with accute accuracy Moore's 'New England', with its despair, tyranny and loss of freedom under the rule of a totalitarian fascist regime. His illustrations are a striking mixture of pen, ink and Xeroxes subtly inked by Lloyd himself, Siobhan Dodds and Steve Whitaker. The argument over whether or not the WARRIOR series or the DC series were the best format for V FOR VENDETTA will rage on, but my money's on this new edition, which beats them both. ENGLAND PREVAILS.

James Sewell


THERE'S FOUR WALLS, TWO WINDOWS WITH SIX BARS, ONE TOILET WITH NO SEAT, AND THERE'S A WOODEN PARTITION, AND A COT, AND CARVED ON THE COT IS THE NAME "EMMA"...
...AND THERE'S ME...
"HELP US TO BE WORTHY OF THY MERCY, AS WE WERE WHEN THOU DIDST TURN ASIDE THY WRATH...
"THAT WRATH WHICH DID RAIN FIRE FROM THE HEAVENS.
AMEN.
TAKE YOUR DRESS OFF, PLEASE.

Revolver

ISSUE 1

(Fleetway Publishing, £1.65)

With all those guys called Hughes working on REVOLVER, Fleetway's new 'young adult' comic monthly, I just had to take a closer look at the first issue. A full-colour, fifty-page monthly strip publication — with only two ads, to boot — just has to have enough potential in its contents to ensure its survival, since otherwise it's an expensive risk. REVOLVER's future looks good, however.

Presented in a flashy, glossy style, REVOLVER's editor Peter K Hogan has pulled in some well-known faces — such as ARKHAM ASYLUM writer Grant Morrison, designer Rian Hughes, rock journalist Charles Shaar Murray, CRISIS artist Floyd Hughes, 2000AD collaborators Peter Milligan and Brendan McCarthy, plus a generous dash of DEADLINE and WARRIOR regulars — and some daring material. *Dare* is EAGLE's Dan Dare souped-*down* for the gritty nineties by Morrison and Hughes. The most widely publicised of REVOLVER's strips, it shows the most promise. Morrison has Moore's nose for a good story but has the anarchic youth Moore is beginning to lose. *Purple Days, Pinhead Nation, Happenstance And Kismet* and Rogan Gosh are the kind of material that made DEADLINE so hit-and-miss in the early days, but Julie *Beryl The Bitch* Hollings' *Dire Streets* and the mysterious IG (it just has to be the incomparable Igor Goldkind)'s *Nine Inches To The Mile* are worth the price of admission alone. DEADLINE and CRISIS are already out there, however, and caution must be exercised by Hogan, Hughes and Co.

Dave Hughes

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Dave Hughes

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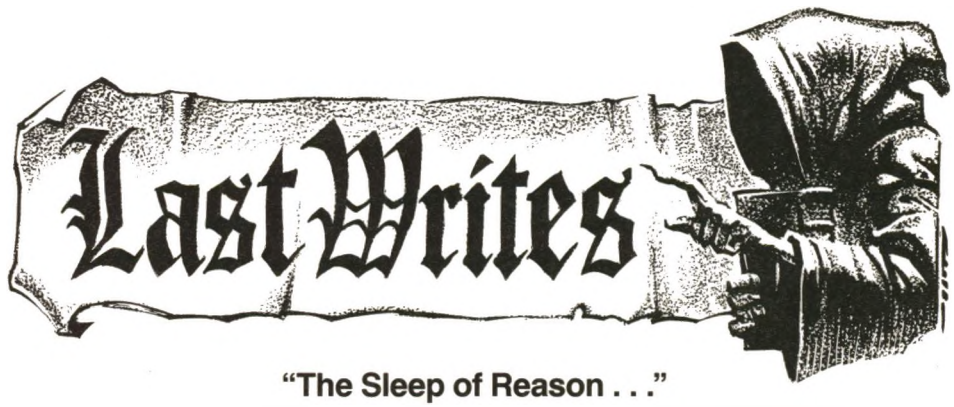


"The Sleep of Reason . . ."

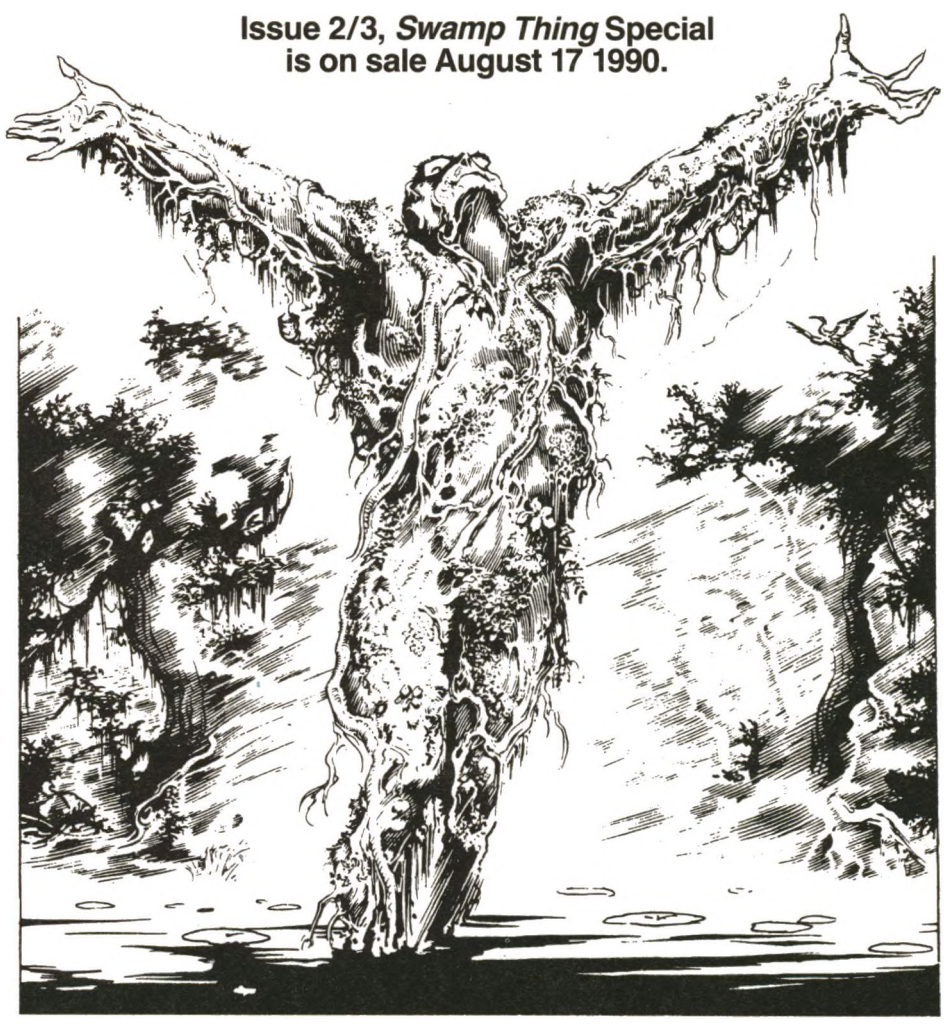
Planned and researched for nearly eighteen months, the SWAMP THING issue of SKELETON CREW is next up, featuring articles, interviews and features relating to the comic life of the Bog-God himself — DC Comics' best-selling horror character. Toplining a major new interview with Alan Moore, writer of the most successful SWAMP THING series to date and also of such comic milestones as WATCHMEN, V FOR VENDETTA and BIG NUMBERS, there will also be a full SWAMP THING bibliography, an article and comic strip from artist Steve Bissette, an article on HELLBLAZER's John Constantine, something by Rick Veitch and a SWAMP THING art gallery. In addition, there is original fiction from both Brian Lumley and R. Chetwynd-Hayes.

If you haven't subscribed yet (details in the small print on page 3), you'll find the SWAMP THING special on sale in newsagents and specialist shops from August 17 1990. And keep watching for news of a contributors' signing session, to follow up the successful signings at Forbidden Planet and Mega-City Comics!

Thanks this issue go to the contributors, to Dark Horse and Twentieth Century Fox, to everyone who came to the Cafe Munchen on June 16, to the design guys who worked a twelve-hour day (including Lee and James, who did it for free), and to Michelle, Jon, Dave, John, Clive, Paul, Phil, Shameless, Adrian, the Associates, Winsor Beck, Palace, Dave Lewis, Harry, Liz, Jane and Mike.

Issue 2/2 is dedicated to Emma Cattell, who doesn't *really* know why.

Issue 2/3, *Swamp Thing* Special is on sale August 17 1990.



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ADVERTISEMENT

MICHAEL J. AUTREY, BOOKSELLER

13624 Franklin Street, No. 5
Whittier, California 90602
(213) 945-6719

Dear Stephen King Fans:

By now, most of you are aware of Doubleday's plans to re-issue THE STAND, but for those of you who aren't the following may prove of interest.

On April 25th (my birthday), Doubleday published the unexpurgated version of Stephen King's "The Stand". This version has a new beginning and a new end ... it has been updated for the nineties, and is approximately 500 pages longer than the original. The book will include 12 black and white illustrations by renowned artist Bernie Wrightson (CYCLE OF THE WEREWOLF). The first printing of the trade edition was 400,000 copies.

There was some concern that the British edition would precede the American; however, I have it on good authority that the British edition, originally scheduled for the end of March, was pushed back to May 9th, so that the American edition was, without question, the true first; price $24.95.

As for the signed, limited edition (see the back cover advertisement for a picture), it is truly spectacular. an absolutely stunning book. My congratulations to Peter Schneider and Doubleday for this masterpiece. They have truly done justice to the book, which many believe is King's best. I cannot think of any way to improve on what they've done.

Perhaps it will help if I describe the book to you: it is full grain leather. The book is stamped in gold; King's name and the book title are stamped in red. The spine has four raised hubs. A better grade of paper is used in this edition.

The end papers are red silk moire. The corners of the pages are rounded. The book has been printed in two colours: black (for text) and red (for ornamental designs).

The book is encased in a varnished, wooden box stained in ebony (black), with a brass plate on top of the box. The top of the box lifts up and the book is laid inside, extracted by a silk pull-ribbon. The interior of the box is lined with red silk. The book itself has a glassine wrapper. The design motif is supposed to suggest the "family bible", since King had indicated in his preface to this edition that the book is a "long tale of dark Christianity". To protect the book during shipping, a double, reinforced, customized box has been designed.

The good news is: I have lots of copies of the trade edition for sale and can pretty much guarantee first printings. Now, for the bad news: I have copies of THE STAND Limited available. However, they are coming to me from secondary sources and are expensive. I have not been successful in obtaining copies directly from Doubleday, as each sales rep was allotted only 33 copies to distribute amongst all of their accounts. If you find a good source for these, please let me know. Also, if you have copies for sale, I would appreciate knowing that as well. It may still be possible to find copies at retail if you shop around — if you can't, then please call me — the book is worth paying a premium for.

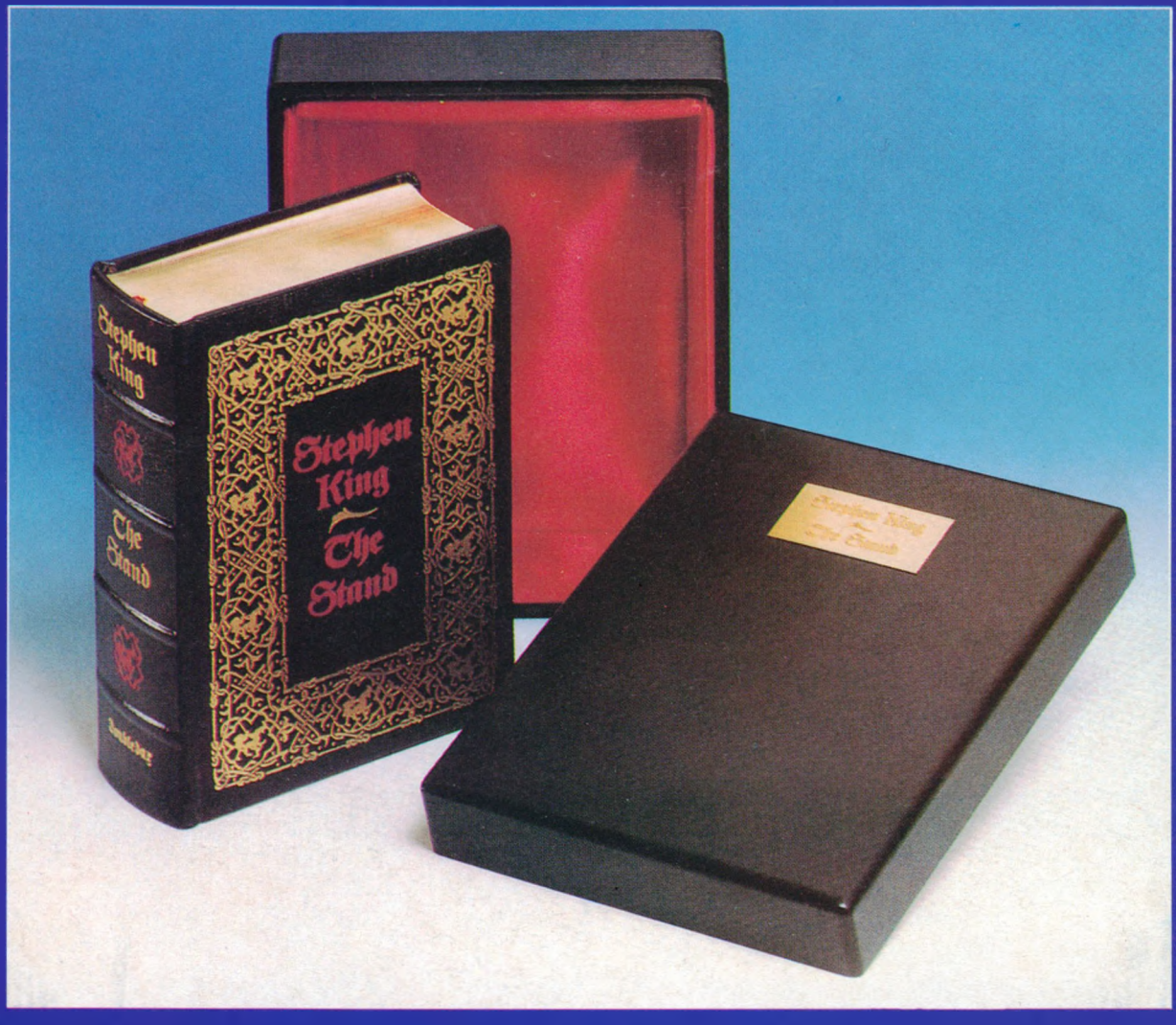
Please understand the uniqueness of this situation. This may well be the nicest King Limited ever done. It is also the first King Limited to be done by a major publishing house. Consequently, the old rules don't apply anymore. I haven't had any better luck finding these at retail than you have.

If you are willing to accept the fact that the demand for these incredible books far exceeds supply, and you are willing to pay a premium for a chance to own one, then I can help you obtain a truly special book. I've already heard of dealers quoting prices much higher than mine. This book is definitely going to continue to rise in value as time goes on.

I only have a few of these available, so don't hesitate to call me as soon as you get this letter.

As a side note, I would like to mention that Doubleday will be simultaneously re-issuing their other King titles: CARRIE, SALEM'S LOT, NIGHT SHIFT and THE SHINING. These will be redesigned as 6"x9" books with reset type and much sturdier bindings. CARRIE will be $18.95, NIGHT SHIFT will be $19.95, SALEM'S LOT and THE SHINING will each be $21.95. I will have all of these available, along with THE STAND.

Sincerely,
Michael J. Autrey.



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Michael J. Autrey 13624 Franklin Street #5 Whittler, CA 90602 0101 (213) 945-6719

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